

ProAge

Preparation for Active Ageing

Handbook

Voluntary engagement for promoting senior's life quality

■ A new curriculum for adult learners

Bjerkaker LearningLab 2020

2018-1-HU01-KA204-047707



The curriculum has been prepared in the „Preparation for Active Ageing” ERASMUS + project in 2020.

The project partners and their contact address:

Alsómocsolád local government erasmusplusam@gmail.com

www.alsomocsolad.hu

Budapest XV. district government erasmusplus@bpxv.hu

ALP.PECA Szlovénia viktorija.barbic@alpeca.si

Bjerkaker Learning Lab Norvégia sturlabjerkaker@gmail.com

Authors: Tor Inge Martinsen,

Sturla Bjerkaker

Professional lector: Sturla Bjerkaker

The English translation checked by: Kleisz Teréz PhD.

ISBN 978-82-691938-0-0

Responsible publisher: Sturla Bjerkaker, BLL

Project manager: Bálintné Jauch Rita

Professional coordinator: Kovács Dezső PhD.

Professional supporters: Halmai Gáborné Zsuzsa, Pitzné Keller
Anita

This publication is the property of the Alsómocsolád Local Government. The owner provides open access to all interested parties to use this curriculum. In case of any modification the owner requires information about the changes in the material. The project was supported by the Erasmus+ programme of the EU Commission.



A Handbook on voluntary engagement for promoting senior's life quality

THE MAIN PART OF THIS DOCUMENT IS A HANDBOOK – A CURRICULUM - WHICH PURPOSE IS TO GUIDE FACILITATORS AND GROUP LEADERS TO INVOLVE SENIORS IN VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES. THIS IS DONE BY PRESENTING CASES, EXAMPLES, RESEARCH, INTERVIEWS AND ADVICES ON HOW TO BE A GOOD FACILITATOR.

Preparation for active ageing – a new curriculum for adult learners.

An Erasmus + project: 2018-1-HU01-KA204-047707

Oslo/Hamar, Norway, December 2019

Content

1. Common introduction	4
2. Norwegian introduction	11
3. Growing old in Norway	15
4. Definitions	18
5. The voluntary sector in Norway	23
6. Learning and ageing – importance and opportunities	25
7. Handbook – Guidelines for facilitators	29
8. Ideas and cases	36
9. Pilot groups – dialogue and ideas	39
10. Seniors in society and politics	49
11. References and literature	54
12. Attachments	56
12.1 Voluntary engagement among seniors (report)	56
12.2 A guide for group leaders	89
12.3 Senior Programs – Survey and Wishlist	95



1. Common introduction

The demographic turn and the age paradoxon

The social view on older age has significantly changed in Europe and North-America in the second half of the XXth century. The honour and respect, the taken for granted attitudes of earlier historical periods towards the elderly, was replaced by a radically different new social phenomenon appearing in the modern era of the globalized world and its welfare societies. In 1970 in her monumental work „La Vieillesse”, (The Coming of Age” in English version) Simone de Beauvoir intentionally broke the „conspiracy of silence” concerning the conditions and position of old people. She pointed out that „Old age is something like a shameful secret for the current society, it is not the subject of a polite discussion. It is not just the guilt of negligence but direct

crime against the elderly. Old people are treated as outcasts of society behind the myth of economic development and abundance.”¹ (Beauvoir 1972:6)

The answers for a basic question, whether the old age is a treasure or burden for societies and families are becoming more complicated in the XXI. century. The respect of the parents (*Honour your father and your mother*) was already written in the Ten Commandments of the Bible. The Indian culture and Chinese Confucian values, as well as the Islamic traditions also give great respect to the elderly. In the value system of the big religions old people and their life experiences are regarded with esteem. In the Greek and Roman culture the wisdom of the elderly was also highly appreciated. (Barabás 2013)

In this era, the loneliness, nuclear family, the single parenting, the single way of life, poverty, illnesses and the reverse socialization - when the younger teaches the older for the necessary digital knowledge and orientation, are the signs and symptoms of the changed environment around elderly people.

Well known facts are what the demography reflects: in modern societies citizens are getting older and older. The share of people over the age 60 has reached 25-34% in some "ageing societies". The statistical indicators underpin, that within these societies the share of old people increasing, as well as the average age of people, and most importantly, the increase of those years, in which old people can live in good health.

From an economic and social policy point of view these demographic figures mean a serious headache for decision makers. By whom and how the resources can be created for the increasing and longer living of the elderly generation?

Viewing the elderly age from the individuals' perspective, it is not easy for the old person to retire after a long active life. The paradox of ageing is well described by Beauvoir: „Each human is subject to death and each of them think about it. Many of them are getting old but almost none of them are willing to face this embarrassing change calmly. Nothing should be wanted more than retirement and yet, nothing is wanted least than old age.”² (Beauvoir 1972:10)

¹ It is translated into English from the Hungarian publication so it may differ from the English translation of the French origin.

² See the previous footnote

In the process of ageing, the moment of retirement represents a dramatic event, because the former active years from one moment to another, have to be replaced by a different way of life. In this new situation the share of duties and responsibilities is shrinking, the financial position is changing and the former personal contacts are becoming less frequent. This new situation could lead to depression, loneliness and to different mental and physical illnesses. The elderly age perceived by the majority of the societies is still a kind of undervalued stage of life.

Nevertheless, retirement could bring a new opportunity for the given generation. The seniors cannot be regarded as a homogeneous group. By the World Health Organisation's (WHO) grouping, between the age of 60-74, a person is considered to be elderly; between 75-89 years we talk of old age; between 90-99 years the very old age comes; and over 100 years one enters the age of Methuselah. Based on the definition of the WHO, the time of retirement in European societies coincides with the elderly age - as in the states of the continent the completion of labour market activity takes place between 60-67 years of age.

The process of getting old takes place in various ways and 'routes'. Elderly people themselves have different strategies in their new period of life. One is set to build a new career. The other possible option is a gradual withdrawal but still remaining active. The third one is giving up, a kind of drifting with life events. The last one is still a frequent pattern, many people cannot find their place in the family and in their communities after retirement. (Füzesi et al. 2013).

Understanding elderly age

At the beginning of the 20th century, the way of scientific approach about ageing and older generations has gone through some significant changes. An often cited model was the deficit model – which explained ageing not as a process but rather as a state of decline, and focused on the loss of abilities and skills of the elderly, both in the field of physical and of mental functions. This approach has become considerably marginalised in our day but the stereotypes pertaining to the model may still be encountered in ageing policies and in the communication concerning the elderly.

Another approach which has real significance and influence these days is the activity theory. It claims that after finishing the active period of their lives, elderly people are still in need of finding certain roles in their societies, communities and families. In order

to be able to do that and to realise an active ageing they must preserve as many of their previous activities as possible. Activity and social participation are essential elements in the lives of the elderly.

The concept of active ageing gained a new sense in the WHO (World Health Organization) document - titled 'Active Ageing - Policy Framework' - prepared for the United Nation's Madrid World Assembly on Ageing in 2002. The document interprets active ageing as an opportunity for all the members of the retired generation to attain a physical, mental and social well-being, and to participate – according to their needs -, in all areas of social, economic, cultural and community life as well as in the support of their families, their immediate and extended environments. According to the approach of the WHO, the services and care improving the elderly's quality of life and actualising their safety are indispensable in order to attain the goal. (WHO, 2002)

The international political discourse on old age

The increasing number of elderly people, as well as the dilemmas related to ageing have been present in the political discourses of Europe and in the international organisations for more than 30 years.

The universal principles for elderly people (United Nations Principles for Older Persons 1991) lay down the protection of independence during their whole life, the provision of social participation aiming at keeping the older adults integrated in society, the provision of care enabling them living in dignity and security and the value of self-fulfillment during their whole life. In the new century the UN has already adopted 5 world reports and several other updated presentations and forecasts on this theme. (World Population Ageing).

The EU declared the year 2012 as the European Year for Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity. Other world organizations like the World Bank or the OECD put into the focus the employment possibilities for older people with the provision of a flexible framework and non-discrimination environment. By the research of the EUROBAROMETER in 2012 one in every five European adult personally experienced ageism and age discrimination in the labour market. (Eurobarometer 2012).

During the last decades, several professional programs, action plans were born to influence the way of life in older age on local and national and international level. Each of them considers this period of life as valuable, worth developing both for the

individual and the society. Preferred learning forms of the old people like elderly clubs, reading circles, learning circles, summer universities, folk high schools, camps, workshops, third age universities, community planning actions all built into the traditional practice of humanistic adult education. (Kleisz 2016)

Research on the old population covers several fields and themes: dementia and Alzheimer, healthy diet, preventing falling down, supporting technologies and robots, loneliness, ageing on the countryside, social involvement of the elderly, poverty, discrimination, adequate elderly friendly living environment, etc. In the EU the Horizon 2020 programme and its subprogram, the Health, Demographic Change and Wellbeing targets the sustainability of healthy way of life and the elderly care system. Research programs get support from the program to develop digital technologies to support the independent way of life of elderly people, permanent monitoring of their health status, the control of their food intake and provide personalized advice and care service for elderly.

Briefly about the ProAge „Preparation for Active Ageing” Erasmus+ project

Our project aimed to formulate a non-formal learning curriculum which presents good practices and innovative solutions for conscious preparation for active aging. These practices and activities are increasingly needed in ageing societies and are not - or hardly - accessible in formal learning materials. The project partners created a complex curriculum, which provides complex knowledge via domestic and international examples. It is suitable for civil organizations, elderly clubs, folk high schools, cultural institutions, libraries, and also for families and individuals who seek and want to achieve the individual 'routes' to old age. It is important that preparation for active ageing should take place consciously, adjusting to the characteristics of different generations and individuals.

An important goal is to avoid lagging behind and keeping pace with progress. The curriculum provides knowledge and experience in four important fields of life. The four modules of the curriculum can be used together as one volume. However, each of the modules can serve different target groups and different interests and can be used separately as well.

The first module is about IT teaching and learning in elderly age. There are a lot of courses available for IT. Our module's significant feature is that it pays special attention to the characteristics of learning in later life. The content and the teaching methods of the module are adjusted to their special needs and learning pace. The second module gives examples, best practices and instructions for all age-groups concerning voluntary activities. Participation in the life of the wider communities through volunteer activities is also important for elderly people as this domain helps to keep social ties with other persons and groups. This knowledge of participation in community life comes from Norway. Community activities, and meeting with different generations is one of the best way to fight against loneliness and desperate depression. In order to pursue healthy way of life, to be active is very relevant for elderly people. The third module shares knowledge and provides advice on how to maintain or build up new habits for healthy lifestyle, useful leisure activities, nutritional advice and recreation possibilities. Slovenian experience presents physical activity patterns suitable for elderly. Also a healthy diet is an important ingredient of active ageing. The most threatening and still incurable illness for elderly people is demencia and its special form, the Alzheimer disease. The fourth module on this topic provides a lot of advice for family members how to adjust their life to this illness and how to make the progress of the illness bearable. The fourth module brings up several good practices on active ageing and the cooperation of generations as well as recommending what to do if it turns out that a family member lives with Alzheimer or Dementia.

The authors are convinced that each generation needs to pay attention to the upcoming period of life, not only those who are already in close proximity to retirement age.

What are the innovations in in our curriculum?

We consider that the whole approach, the selection of the themes of the curriculum, the proposed methods in each modules, the simple non-professional language which can be understood by lay people, the structures of the modules, (starting from simple or basic issues towards more complicated ones), the community approach to the target groups, and the proposed community-based trainings (enforcing local democracy and the involvement of multiple generations) are the most important innovative features of the curriculum.

The selected themes cover 4 important aspects of life in old age. Bringing together the IT training, Volunteer activities, Handling Demencia and Alzheimer's and Activity can provide a good preparation for active ageing for different generations. It is not only the task of the 50+ generation close to retirement but it should start at an earlier stage of life, at least from the 30+ generation. Furthermore, the core idea of active ageing has to be acquired already in childhood via one's family life.

The preparation for active ageing requires a complex knowledge. Family members need to be prepared how to handle threatening illnesses, what social responsibility and volunteerism mean at an elderly age, and how to change learning patterns later in life. Therefore the preparation for active ageing needs a complex approach through different avenues. This knowledge has to become a basic value for the people involved, for local communities, families and multiple generations.

Kovács Dezső PhD. honorary professor

References

- Barabás, Katalin (2013) Az időskor kultúrantropológiája. in: Kállai J. Kaszás B. Tiringer I. Az időskorúak egészségpszichológiája. Medicina Kiadó. 435p.
- Beauvoir, Simone de (1972): Az öregség. Európa könyvkiadó 862p
- Brettner, Zsuzsa (2016) Elderly, caring for the elderly, dilemmas. in: Pilot project for quality ageing. Opening Conference publication. 22-26p.
- Dementia: A Public Health Priority (2012) WHO and Alzheimer's Disease International
- A demencia világa (2015) Irodalmi áttekintés szakembereknek. Budapest: Római Katolikus Egyházi Szeretetszolgálat.
https://www.inda.info.hu/uploads/dokumentumok/demencia_kiadvany_A5_javitott.pdf
- Füzesi, Zs. Törőcsik M. Lampek K. (2013) Az időskor egészségpszichológiája: tények és trendek. in: Kállai J. Kaszás B. Tiringer I. Az időskorúak egészségpszichológiája. Medicina Kiadó. 435p.
- Heim Szilvia (ed.)(2015): A házi orvosok szerepe és lehetőségei az időskori demenciák ellátásában. Pécs, Inda Interprofesszionális Alapprogram
https://www.inda.info.hu/uploads/dokumentumok/Haziorvosok_szerepe_web.pdf
- Kapaszkodó(k) (2017): Gyakorlati tanácsok a demencia útvesztőjében. Budapest, Katolikus Szeretetszolgálat Alapítvány
https://www.inda.info.hu/uploads/dokumentumok/Kapaszkod%C3%B3k_2ik%20kiad%C3%A1s.pdf
- Kleisz, Teréz (2016) Az időskorúak tanulása. In: Az Aktív időskor és időskori tanulás nemzetközi konferencia válogatott anyaga in: Tudásmenedzsment XVII. évfolyam 2. különszám 2016. december
Pécsi Tudományegyetem. http://kpvk.pte.hu/sites/kpvk.pte.hu/files/files/EKONYVEK/xvii2kuloszam_2016.pdf
- The 2018 Ageing Report. ISSN 2443-8014 (online) Underlying Assumptions & Projection Methodologies INSTITUTIONAL PAPER 065 | NOVEMBER 2017 The EU ECOFIN
Internet source:
Minőségi élet 50+ Mintaprogram(Bilateral Activities in the Capacity Building and Institutional Cooperation. HU 11 .B1- 2017)
www.manorquality.eu

2. Norwegian introduction

a. Presentation of ProAge – the background and aim

Preparation for Active Ageing” – ProAge – is an EU Erasmus + Project coordinated by the Hungarian municipality Alsomocsolad and recognized with No 2018-1-HU01-KA204-047707. The project period is from Autumn 2018 to Autumn 2020. Partners in the project come from Hungary (2), Slovenia (1) and Norway (1). The Norwegian partner is Bjerkaker LearningLab (BLL), a not-for-profit NGO.

The overall aim for ProAge is to look at different activities and solutions to secure an active and quality-based aging period for seniors 65 +. The partners have different profiles for their participation in the project, covering different tasks like prevention of and coping with dementia, promoting sports activities, digital skills and community learning and enhancing democratic participation among seniors.

Seniors are increasingly seen as not only receivers but also contributors to social development, whose abilities to act for the betterment of themselves and their societies should be woven into policies and programmes at all levels. In the coming decades many countries are likely to face fiscal and political pressures in relation to public systems of health care, pensions and social protection for – and by – a growing older population³. The ProAge project wish to give a small contribution to this development. The older is bolder.

³ UN World Population Ageing Report, New York 2019



2b ProAge -The Norwegian Contribution

This handbook is based on the Norwegian activities as part of the EU Erasmus +- project “Preparation for Active Ageing” – ProAge - which has been running for approximately two years since the Autumn 2018.

The material has been designed for people who facilitate activities for seniors on organisational and/or local levels, within voluntary organisations (NGOs) and public services.

The guidelines and methodology that readers will find in this report are mainly drawn upon the following activities implemented in the project period:

Seniors involvement in and for NGOs

A survey among major Norwegian NGOs on the attitudes and views of the NGOs on senior members as resources in the organisations (full report incl.)

Dialogue groups – a method to involve seniors in analysing and defining relevant activities in their local community

- Dialogue groups – a guide for group leaders (guide incl.)
- Test groups: evaluation and recommendations for facilitators based on the three test groups implemented in the project.

- **The Norwegian Partner and Authors**

- The Norwegian Partner in the EU Erasmus+-project “Preparation for Active Ageing” – ProAge- is *Bjerkaker LearningLab (BLL) (Oslo)*, a non-profit NGO run by *Mr. Sturla Bjerkaker* with partners. Mr. Bjerkaker is an adult educator who have studied pedagogy and andragogy. He has had leading positions in the adult education field both nationally and on the international scene.

Among his former positions acting as a two-decade-long CEO in The Norwegian Association for Adult Learning (NAAL) can be mentioned. Mr. Bjerkaker is an inducted member of the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame. Bjerkaker LearningLab has gained broad recognition and experience so far as a partner in European development projects.

Bjerkaker LearningLab’s activities in this project has been assisted by *Mr. Tor Inge Martinsen (Hamar)*. Mr. Martinsen, an educated teacher, has worked in different major NGOs in Norway and in public health administration. He has been self-employed for 20 years, working as project manager and as chairman of institutional boards. For 20 years Mr. Martinsen has served also as a local politician (city council, executive council). He is an experienced announcer from major international sport events (handball: World Championships, Olympic Games)

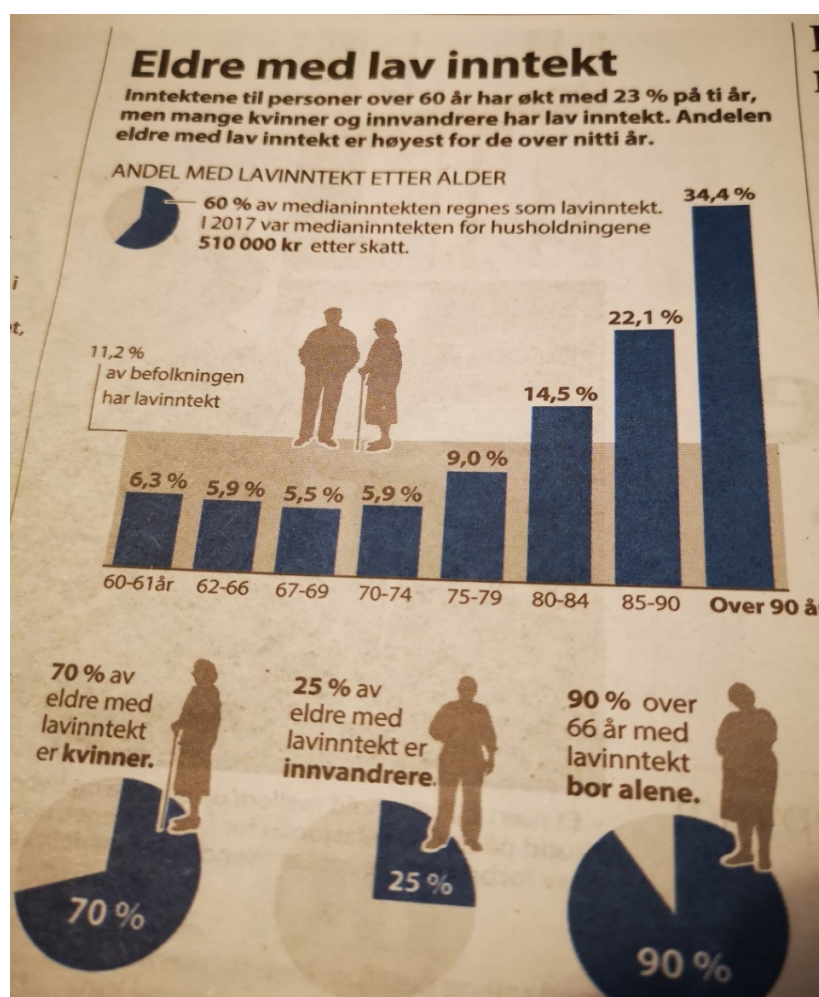
2c Presentation of the Handbook

The main part of this document is a Handbook – a curriculum - which purpose is to guide facilitators and group leaders to involve seniors in voluntary activities. This is done by presenting cases, examples, conducting a research, doing interviews and providing advices on how to be a good facilitator. A special weight is put on the belief that seniors should not only be involved into activities by civic leaders, but themselves should be the ones embracing the notion that they are perfectly capable of engaging themselves if they wish to participate both in planning and creating activities. In this way, the Handbook operates on at least two levels, the organisational and the individual level.

3. Growing old in Norway

According to an UN-Report (UN 2019) the world's population is ageing. Virtually every country in the world is experiencing growth in both the number and the proportion of older persons in their population. This is, states the report, one of the most significant social transformations of the 21st century. This indeed also applies to Norway. Out of Norway's population (approx.) 5,3 mill. (Jan. 2018) 786350 inhabitants were above 67 years – equivalent to 15% of the population. Expected living age for women: 84,4 years – for men: 81,2 years. The living age for both sexes is expected to rise in the coming decades. ⁴

Illustration from the newspaper Aftenposten 12.12.2019, telling e.g. that 90 % of the poor population aged 66 years and over is living alone.



⁴ www.pensjonistforbundet.no

The number of elderly people in Norway will increase, partly because of the large birth-rate («baby boomers») in the years following the end of the second world war.

Today approx. 12% of the Norwegian population is 70+ years old. This proportion will be 19% in 2060.⁵ There is a larger proportion of older people in smaller rural communities than in the cities. This tendency will be amplified. In the capital Oslo in 2040 only 12% of the population will be 70+, while in some smaller rural municipalities people older than 70 years will constitute more than 30% of the population.

Research, both international and Norwegian, underpin unambiguously the importance of activities among seniors. This applies to both physical, social and cultural activities.

Active seniors have higher level of life quality and live longer. It is a paradox that, despite this knowledge, there is a lack of programs designed for seniors both in voluntary organisations on central and local level and in public institutions.

This handbook focuses some of these challenges and provide the readers with tools on how to involve seniors in different activity programs.

Norway in Europe

Although Norway has a comparatively strong public welfare system and a wide range of voluntary organisations, it shares with the other European nations the challenges of meeting the need of the growing older population for improved services.

In 2017 the American John A. Hartford Foundation published a comparative study on living conditions for old people in 18 selected OECD-countries. The survey focused on five central aspects shaping the living situation for old people:

- Productivity – participation:
Elderly participation in paid and/or voluntary work. Possibilities for lifelong learning.
- Well being:
Good health expectancy – satisfaction with life.

⁵ Statistics Norway www.ssb.no

- Social justice:
Social equality in the population regarding economy, level of education etc.
- Unity:
Good contacts between age groups/generations. Strength of social networks.
- Security:
Safe economy (public/private pensions), access to health and social services, secure surroundings.

Among the 18 selected countries, Norway gets the highest over-all score, with special emphasis on «social justice» and «security». ⁶

Despite this high ranking, the Norwegian society must strengthen its efforts to facilitate more active lives for seniors, both regarding quality and quantity. This handbook focuses on these challenges and the guidelines offered are certainly also transferable to other countries.

The future

Needless to say, it is hard to predict how the living conditions for the elderly in Norway will develop in the coming decades. As has already been pointed out the proportion of old people (67 years+) will rise and we will have a geographical distribution with a higher proportion of old people in small and rural municipalities compared to the more urban areas of Norway. This may result in a weakened economy in rural areas and consequently, a growing difference in the quality of social, medical and activity related services for the elderly. On the other hand: improved medical standards and applied new technology may help old people to lead an independent living and hence exploit improved possibilities for active voluntary participation in the local community.

⁶ www.forskning.no

4. Definitions

In this document, some terms can be understood in different ways and therefore they need definitions and descriptions. The following list is not an authorized one, but it indicates – if special reference is not given - our interpretation of the terms determining the ways we use them in this document.

Adult Education

Adult education refers to educational and learning activities that take place after completion of the formal education in the formal and public-school system. The terminology used by UNESCO is “adult learning and education” (ALE). Some also refer to “continuing education” – e.g. adult and continuing education, which again refers to lifelong learning. Adult education can be both formal, non-formal and informal. The formal education concludes with exams, the non-formal takes often place in adult education practice of the NGOs⁷ and the informal learning takes place anywhere and always.

Ageing

In humans, the process of **ageing** represents the accumulation of changes in a human being over time, encompassing physical, psychological, and social changes. Reaction time, for example, may slow with age, while knowledge of world events and wisdom may expand.⁸

Active Ageing

By active ageing we focus on seniors’ and elderly people’s own contribution to life quality. Active ageing is about both physical and mental processes and activities which make life meaningful in older years.

Life quality

This booklet is about active ageing and life quality in older years. By life quality we mean the ability to have an active, stable and harmonious life both physically and

⁷ In the Nordic countries we find both Adult Education Associations, Study Associations and Folk High Schools which offers a wide range of non-formal courses.

⁸ Wikipedia

mentally throughout the life span. Social engagement and social inclusion, and interaction with other people are included in the definition (e.g. to avoid loneliness).

Lifelong learning

Lifelong learning is an “ongoing, voluntary, and self-motivated” pursuit of knowledge for either personal or professional reasons. Therefore, it does not only enhance social inclusion, active citizenship, and personal development, but also self-sustainability, as well as competitiveness and employability.⁹

Senior citizen

To be old is a common – and often well-received – situation for all those who are able to live a long life. But to be called “an old man” is not likely the same. Strangely, it is better in our culture to be called an older man, than an old man. Nowadays, the perception changes and new terms are put forward, we talk about seniors or senior citizens. But when do we turn into being seniors? We have various definitions: In some settings, we talk about 55 +, others 60 +, others again 62 + and most common: 65 +. Seniors are men and women that have lived more than 65 years.

Voluntary engagement

Voluntary engagement takes two strands in the Norwegian context: First, you can be engaged as a charity person, offer a helping hand to others with different needs, e.g. be a visitor and conversation partner for older people, offering help for shopping and cooking etc. It involves a diversity of opportunities. Secondly, your voluntary engagement takes shape by being an active member of one or more voluntary organisations. The first engagement is individual, the second one is a more common and collective effort.

Voluntary organisations

Voluntary organisations are also called non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or civil society organisations (CSOs). What they have in common is that they are founded and established by people who either have a special interest or a special need to address and their commitment leads them to be involved in the activities of the

⁹ Cedefop/EU

organisation and its management through voluntary work done by the members themselves.

In Norway, like the other Nordic countries, we have voluntary organisations for almost any aim or purpose.



5. The voluntary sector in Norway

The voluntary sector – the non-governmental and civil society organisations (NGOs and CSOs, hereafter in this chapter: NGOs) – has a long and rich tradition in Norway. The first NGOs were created and established at the beginning of the 18th century.

Over the centuries, the NGOs have served as a very important link between the public sector and the inhabitants. The NGOs have been functioning as “schools of democracy” for the people.

After 400 years in union under Denmark, Norway in 1814 decided its own constitution although the country still remained in union up to 1905 with Sweden. This was a more balanced union and Norway developed its cultural and political independence during the 19th century. The rise of democratic institutions started, and more and more people got democratic rights. In this situation, there was a need for cooperation, a need for knowledge, a need for joint efforts. As the public sector still was weak – compared with the present – NGOs have become one of the answers to these challenges.

Therefore, during the 18th century, the creation and development of NGOs was huge. NGOs were established for many purposes and today Norway has NGOs for almost

any purpose and the country has around 100 000 units of smaller and bigger, national, regional and local NGOs¹⁰.

The aim of the first NGOs was to spread knowledge among the citizens, knowledge about farming, gardening, household management and democracy. Later came NGOs for definite political purposes, like the temperance movement, sport and religion-based NGOs. The first political party was formed in 1879. The labour movement started to grow at the beginning of the 19th century, the co-operative movement likewise – strong both among workers and farmers. There is a long tradition of cultural civic groups which promoted Norwegian language, folk music, dance and culture. Later special interest groups joined the NGO-landscape: charity, humanitarian work-oriented, and NGOs for/of people living with disabilities. and so on.

What unites and what splits NGOs?

What NGOs have in common is that they differ from both private and public sector in several fields, among others:

- The nature of volunteerism built on altruism and philanthropy and – for most of them but not all – seeking common solutions.
- The economy of voluntary sector, built on public spending, membership fees, sponsors' contribution, donations, and gifts.
- The not-for-profit principle, that means NGOs do not seek to generate a profit but if they gain a surplus it should be turned back to contributing solely to the purposes of the NGO itself.
- No special jurisdiction, no separate acts or laws, which means that NGOs must lean their jurisdictions on other laws or juridical proceedings.

A shift in the NGO sector

During the last 50 years we have seen a shift in the NGO sector. The big popular movements – e.g. the labour movement – has become weaker while organisations for narrower and time-limited purposes and interest groups have become stronger. Some would describe this development for “from solidarity to charity” because historically popular movements were based on common values and tasks among the members in

¹⁰ The Association for voluntary organisations in Norway, www.frivillighetnorge.no

solidarity with each other, while many NGOs of today have a purpose to act as charities for e.g. vulnerable groups. (See also below.)

On national level, we have around 500 NGO-associations, which operate as “umbrellas” for regional and local branches. The NGO sector is today quite strong when it comes to influencing policies and lobbying. The Ministry of Culture – which has the overall public responsibility for the NGOs – is spending millions of Norwegian kroners to support them.

We can roughly divide voluntary organisations into three categories:

First, the “we for us-organisations”, which e.g. can be trade unions or an association for the blind. People join the organisation and pay a membership fee to solve common problems with the other members.

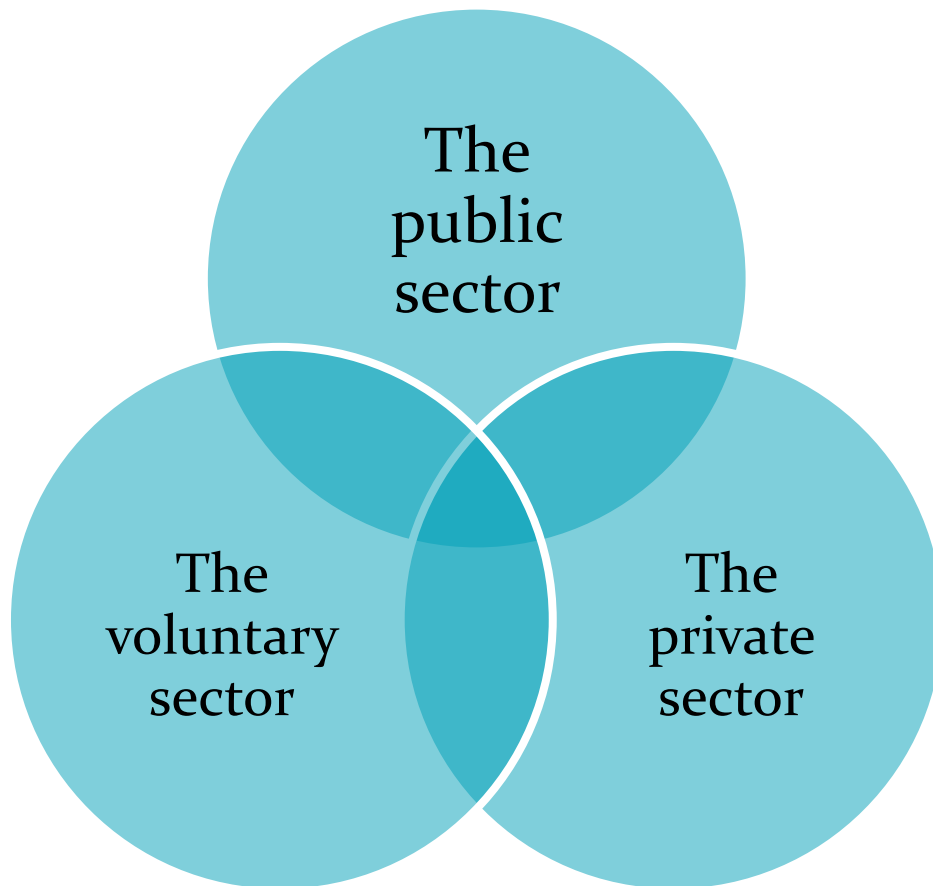
Secondly, we have the “we for me-organisations”: members join to gain personal benefits.

Thirdly, we have the “we for them-organisations”: members join to have a social network where they can organize e.g. help for others, like the Red Cross and others¹¹.

In the survey, which is included in this book, we can see how voluntary organisations look at seniors as members. We will conclude that most of the NGOs in the report view seniors as a valuable recourse for them.

In Norway, we also find NGOs which are especially created and designed by and for seniors. This is e.g. The Norwegian Association for Retired People, Senior Norway and Seniornett. (See also chapter 9) You will also find an association especially working for best possible conditions for those seniors who wish to stay at work if possible: The Centre for Senior Policy. www.seniorpolitikk.no

¹¹ © Sturla Bjerkaker



The Three Sectors

While many countries – may be a majority – divide the society only into a public and a private sector, Norway divide the society into three sectors:

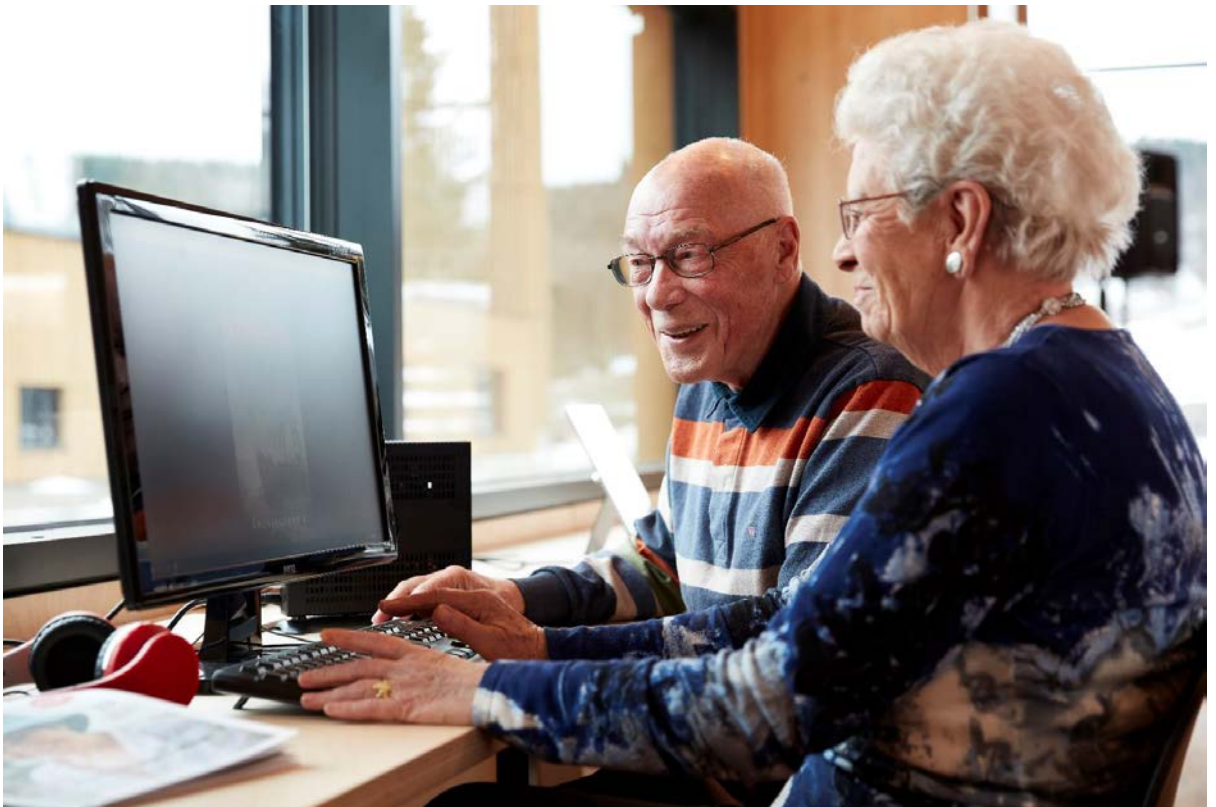
Firstly, the Public Sector, which consists of the state, the counties and the municipalities, the political system, the public management and the law management. The public sector is e.g. responsible for delivering public services, law enforcement, and the legislation in the society.

Secondly, the Private Sector, which is the market, the enterprises, the stock market etc.

Thirdly, the Voluntary Sector, also called the Third Sector or the ideal sector, which is all the NGOs and CSOs. The Third Sector is considered to be a strong partner. *The illustration* indicates that there is an overlap between the sectors when it comes to responsibilities, tasks and interests.

6. Learning and ageing – importance and opportunities

There are no limits for learning throughout life, even though most of the education and learning takes place in the first quarter of people's life. But you are never too old to learn, and in the past decades more focus has been put on lifelong learning for different reasons. Firstly, the rapid changes in society and working life has made continuing education necessary to cope with e.g. the never-ending innovations in technology. Secondly, we live longer and even if we are out of the traditional working life, we need to cope with changes which make our life more complicated. Again: Technology and ICT. Thirdly, motivation for learning is still there, curiosity don't stop at 65. Learning is fun. So, what are the available options?



Learning digital skills

Digital Skills for seniors have been a big issue in Norway. The Government has launched a plan for better ICT-skills among all citizens, since more and more of public service will be based on internet and digital tools. The private sector also changes from face to face service to online service, e.g. the banks. All bank services are

demanding the use of the internet. According to the strategic plan of the public sector civil servants are required in the municipalities to serve the inhabitants and teach them digital skills. The Government also relies on the civil sector, the NGOs in this respect. Here, the Seniornet Norway does a huge job. This NGO has almost 10 000 members and runs «Digital Clubs» in all big cities and in large municipalities. Seniornet has many trainers and teachers, organise courses and does a lot of «hands on» guidance and facilitation.¹² The Popular University and others are also providing courses for seniors on ICT-matters.

Learning life skills

Coping over the life course – regarding your own as well as your closest relatives’ – has become a big issue in later life. What is it about? Coping abilities determine responses to stress and problems in life. It is e.g. about learning the skills how to handle illness, chronic sickness or accept minor and bigger forms of disabilities. There are courses like “To live with diabetes” which is offered by the Association for Adapted Adult Education in Norway. To learn how to use equipment for hard-of-hearing people is also provided by the same association.

The Norwegian Health Association is a large NGO which among other learning activities runs «The Dementia School». They offer courses for family members and others close to the patients and they organize dialogue groups, meetings and seminars. The Norwegian Health Association has a long tradition and a high rate standing for its work with Dementia.

Community education and popular enlightenment

Many NGOs and Adult Education Associations run courses which are closely connected to people’s communities. The Popular University offers courses in almost any subjects for all adults. Among seniors art and languages are particularly popular. Many retired people regularly spend the winter in Spain and many of them wish to learn some Spanish before they go. The Association for Culture and Traditions provide courses in folk dance, handicraft and other fields of national culture. One NGO has specialised for dancing and is called Senior Dance Norway.

¹² www.seniornett.no

The access to most of these courses is easy, the threshold is low, and the senior participants themselves do often have influence on the curricula and the progress. Because even if it is true that you can learn throughout life, you may not learn as quick as you did in younger days.



The study circles

A special method for adult learning which has been developed in the Nordic countries is the Study Circle. This is a learning method which is based on the experiences of the members of the learning group – also called experiential learning or cooperative learning. The study circle curriculum is normally quite flexible and can be changed during the learning process, as the shared experience- based knowledge leads to new directions. The study circle must have a qualified facilitator to secure progress and participation among all. As relying on the participants’ experiences is crucial, the study circle is a method that extremely fits well for seniors. Study Circles and Dialogue Groups are quite similar.

The folk high schools

A special Nordic phenomenon is also the invention of residential folk high schools (boarding schools), established first in Denmark more than 150 years ago. This type of school normally does not end with formal qualification but offers one year of contemplation to prepare for further education and working life. Therefore, most

students at folk high schools are around 20 years of age. But some folk high schools have a special senior profile and offers e.g. courses like “how to prepare for the retiring period”, ICT-courses for elderly, and workshops in art, music, song, dance or fitness trails.

Senior Universities

With different names and in slightly different shapes one can meet Senior Universities, called Senior Academies or – as in e.g. France and England – U3A, University of the Third Age. These NGOs offer e.g. lectures in literature and art, and in many other fields. In Norway, many of these U3A’s are organized by the Popular University (In Norwegian: Folkeuniversitetet).

The libraries

The public libraries operate as also a big arena for learning. We find them in any municipality in Norway (430). In addition to their main function – being a space for books, literature and music – most libraries also offer spaces for gathering and leaders for different courses. Seniors are considered to be one of the main user groups at libraries.

Look up these contacts:

The Norwegian Association for Adult Learning (VOFO) www.vofo.no

The Folk High School Council www.folkehogskole.no

The Popular University www.folkeuniversitetet.no

The National Library [www, nasjonalbiblioteket.no](http://www.nasjonalbiblioteket.no)



7. Handbook – Guidelines for Facilitators

SERVICES – BY AND FOR SENIORS

Introduction

This handbook is basically designed for people who facilitate activities for seniors on two different levels: on central/national level primarily in voluntary organisations – and on local level within voluntary organisations (NGOs) or public services.

Our guidelines and methodology are based on the activities implemented in Norway through the project period and other experiences related to providing organisational and learning activities for seniors.

There is a duality in the challenges and solutions focussing on in this handbook.

Traditionally services for seniors, whether through public services or NGOs, have been organised for the target group, meaning that the need and design of the service(s) have been defined by the provider. To a much lesser degree seniors also have been invited to take part in the processes of designing new programmes adding their own perceptions.

Irrespective of methods of planning in general, there is an obvious gap between the actual programs for seniors – be it physical, cultural, learning or social – and the objective needs of the target group.

In the Norwegian society, both in public and in the voluntary sector, there is for ideological and political reasons a strong tendency to focus on and communicate with the users when the services are in the planning phase. This method ensures the providers that both the content and the design of a program reflect the wishes and needs of the users. Such democratic and user-focused approaches are seldom practiced when seniors are the target group.

In this handbook we have compiled some guidelines for facilitators of services for seniors based on pilots where we have tested the methodology of involving the target group in planning of services.

Strong NGOs and volunteerism are one of the most significant pillars of the Norwegian society. In our project we have, in cooperation with Frivillighet Norway (*The Association of Voluntary Organisations in Norway*), produced a survey focusing on to what degree NGOs on central level have programs designed by seniors recruited to take part in sharing their attitudes and perceptions and utilising them as resources in their organisation.

Based on this survey, in this handbook we present advice and guidelines on how NGOs can increase the involvement of seniors in organisational matters in their capacity as volunteers, elected representatives/board members etc. *See cases on page 29.*

Dialogue groups – a democratic approach

We have previously stated that seniors have been invited to take part in processes to define and design services and activities based on their own perceptions to a much lesser degree than other groups in the society.

This is both a democratic and professional challenge. In the ProAge-project we tested dialogue groups as a method to involve seniors in discussing, defining and planning new programmes: activities by and for seniors.

In this part of the curriculum we sum up the experiences drawn from these pilot groups and describe how this methodology of involving seniors in planning activities can be applied by professionals and volunteers facilitating services for this target group.

Pilot groups

We tested the dialogue group-method in three dialogue groups organised in October/November 2019. As part of the preparations we had made a guide for group

leaders (of dialogue groups) and a fixed scheme to map existing and future programs for seniors.

The first group was organised in the Oslo suburb of Furuset in cooperation with Oslo Municipality, the Deichman Library and Activity Centre Furuset.

The 8 senior group members were between 40 and 85 years. Sturla Bjeraker served as group leader and facilitated the discussions.

The second and third group meetings were located at Seniorsenteret Velferden (Seniors' Welfare Centre) in the municipality of Hamar.

The centre is financed by the municipality and offers a wide range of activities for seniors. The participants in the dialogue group were recruited through the CEO of the welfare centre.

The 6 group members were in the age-range 61 – 76 years.

The group discussions were facilitated by Tor Inge Martinsen.

The three group meetings all lasted approximately three hours.

(A summary of the activities in the three pilot groups is attached).

Dialogue groups – guidelines and recommendations

Readers of this handbook have presumably been involved in planning activities for seniors on local or central level, either in a voluntary organisation or as part of public services.

The most common method of planning such activities is, with certain modifications, that the providers themselves define the future content and design of the services through with a limited contact and dialogue with seniors – the actual target group – in advance.

Dialogue groups can both be a supplement and an alternative to this provider-based planning scheme. These are some of the aspects worth considering when facing with the planning and implementing process of a dialogue group as a decisive part of creating services for seniors.

Claiming the right for Seniors to know!

Seniors, both individually and as a group, are carriers of knowledge and valuable experiences when new services are to be planned.

This applies both to the actual content of a new program and how the activities are designed. But providers – as rest of the society – often neglect the load of knowledge owned by seniors, and this may remain as an unused resource. A dialogue group is an effective method to establish contact with seniors' know-how in a given social context.

- Learning point:
Seniors' knowledge and experience constitute a valuable contribution in the course of planning of services targeting them.

A democratic right to be heard!

Democracy is usually defined as "...a form of government in which the people have the authority to choose their governing legislation».

But democratic spirit also has a wider connotation. It applies indeed to peoples' possibilities to influence their everyday life. We take it for granted that people have a right to be heard in matters that have significance for their life situation, whether it be in schools, at a workplace, in their own neighbourhood etc.

But when it comes to services for seniors the importance of a democratic approach seems to be of less importance in the practice than on other sectors of society.

We need to find methods that can strengthen seniors' influence when services for them are planned. Group dialogues can be one way to bridge this democratic gap.

- Learning point:
Seniors have a democratic right to be involved when services are planned. As provider of services it is your responsibility to secure this right.

Discussions in a social context

A group dialogue is a method based on co-action and discussions based on equality and respect. In order to secure a functional group choosing the size of the group and number of group members is of great importance. If the group is too small the input in the discussions and the exchange of knowledge and experience will be limited. In a larger group it is difficult for the facilitator to secure active involvement of all the group members. With too many participants a group will tend to be dominated by the more talkative and many, perhaps a majority of the members will not participate in the discussions.

The test groups we implemented in this project indicate clearly that seniors are motivated to take part in discussions on content and design of services. Based on our experiences we will recommend that 6 to 8 members seems an ideal size of a dialogue group. It is your responsibility as a provider to assemble a group of suitable size related to the topics for discussion.

Irrespective of the size the group leader has an important responsibility to secure involvement from all the participants.

- Learning point:
Size matters. A dialogue group must have a suitable number of participants (6-8) to secure meaningful involvement from all.

Variations are valuable

As we previously have underlined: a dialogue group is based on a method of engaging all the group members.

A group of seniors is heterogeneous regarding the members age, psychological features and social standing. People coming together will carry both overlapping and divergent experiences and opinions.

Seniors don't make uniform groups. The pilot groups in this project underlined the value of variety in opinions and perspectives represented by the group members.

It might prove fruitful to form a dialogue group with members who have already been “insiders” as users of different services for seniors and with people who are searching for suitable activities.

- Learning point:
Building up from a wide range of experiences and positions related to planning services is valuable for the output of the group discussions.

Open dialogue - Group leader's function

Dialogue group is a democratic method based on triggering active involvement of all the participants where the overall goal is to get the outputs of the participants' contribution built into the agenda and to the final product (services for the seniors) proposed by a voluntary organisation or public provider of services.

The function of the leader of the dialogue group is vital. The main challenge is to facilitate the group discussions in a way to secure a democratic process by involving all the group members in the group's discussions.

Providing this leader-responsibility may fall on you, or on a person you find ensuring this criterion makes someone qualified for the task.

The leader of the dialogue group is responsible for planning, organising and summarising the group meetings.

This is of course a demanding facilitating task. It is important to have in mind that the outcome will be delivered by solely by the participants themselves who together will define the activities in the group shaped by own their involvement, experiences, views, questions and opinions.

We have – as part of the pilot groups – produced a guide which may prove helpful for you (or another person selected) as group leader (see attachment).

On the next page follows some key methodological advices to the leader of a dialogue group:

- Your own experiences:
You have most probably previously been involved in voluntary work, chaired meetings, taken part in discussions and activities in local organisations. These elements are of course valuable for you as a facilitator of the discussion group.
- Your knowledge – formal and informal:
Special or professional knowledge gained on the topics your group picks for discussions is not required. But our presumption is that you – the leader of the group – are motivated and feel ready to update yourself on the topic(s) that the dialogue group focuses on.
- Your personal qualities:
There are no general standards for a leader of these kind of group discussions. Our definite advice is that you form the role as group leader based on your own characteristics. Listen actively, ask relevant questions, help to stimulate the discussions, have a democratic approach by activating all the group members.
In short: you ought to create an inclusive and open platform for safe and constructive discussions within the group.
- Your own attitudes:
We presuppose that you consider every participant as equally valuable and that you recognise each group members experience and opinions as important for the output of the group. It is your responsibility to secure an atmosphere that opens for the variety and collective knowledge that the participants represent.

For further guidelines: see “Dialogue Groups – a Guide for Group leaders” (Attachment 2).

8. Ideas and cases

In this chapter we have collected some ideas for and by activities for seniors. Some of the ideas are collected from the survey among NGOs in Norway (se attachment)

Coming together for social activities

Social activities are among the most popular activities for senior engagement. What is it about? The fundamental thing is just to have a space for gathering and being together, having a coffee and a waffle and the chance of talking and talking. Many elderly people live a rather isolated living, being alone a lot and having no one to talk to or with. So, just the case of coming together can be important enough. Senior Centres and libraries offer such spaces. This Handbook collects ideas on how to bring people together and how to make them communicate. The focus is all about voluntary engagement for promoting senior's life quality.

How to recruit seniors to voluntary work?

One senior in one of our pilot groups said: - Nobody has asked me to join! I would be happy to join and do voluntary work to help other seniors who are older than me, if just someone came to ask me.

It is difficult to locate and meet isolated seniors face to face, then, trying to find ways of making them not that isolated. But many of other seniors are regular Facebook or other social media users who are capable of creating a Facebook Group for "Active Seniors", that is one option. Another is to reach seniors through the housing cooperative where they live. Hundreds of seniors in the cities and in suburban areas live in housing cooperatives. The cooperatives have a board and they publish newsletters to their inhabitants. This is an important channel of information. Also, at the coop's annual meetings you could go to present for seniors how they could contribute. The big coop enterprise in Oslo – OBOS – also offer an App which you can use to contact your neighbours.

What do seniors wish? And what can they actually do?

Both in interviews and questionnaires we have asked seniors and NGOs what kind of voluntary work seniors wish to take part in and what kind of activities are regarded to function the best. An interesting finding is that learning activities – like courses and other training programs - get a high score. The same goes for certain social activities and social offers e.g. the “club for men” at Furuset and the “Wednesday club” at Majorstuen. These are activities both for and partly by the seniors themselves. The dance teacher at Majorstuen is 92 years old! Among activities for the seniors tours and travels have been mentioned as strongly requested. Bus tours to Sweden to go shopping are popular at places close to the border. Music, dance and other cultural activities are organized both by seniors themselves and by activity leaders at senior centres. Seniors’ wishes are – in other words – as varied as those of the other groups. And seniors do demonstrate – as other groups – the ability to organize a lot of activities for themselves.

Barriers (and how to remove them)

“One of the biggest barriers against voluntary engagement is to stay outside the social networks that invite you to volunteerism” is one of the conclusions in a report by Oslo Municipality from 2019.¹³ This barrier seems to be difficult to overcome, but the report gives some advice. One is to organise the so called “visiting friends”. Seniors who are already “inside” of active social circles wish to be a visiting friend at e.g. homes or centres for elderly people. Those visiting friends are doing an important outreach job knocking on isolated people’s doors. The visiting friends are offering them to talk with good listeners, who are willing to give their time and attention to listen. In this way they give a voice to the relatively isolated ones to come out of their social seclusion. But how to become a visiting friend? This practice has been organised by e.g. in Oslo by the Red Cross and the Church City Mission and others voluntary organisations.

¹³ “Dugnad for deltakelse – eldreinnstans i frivilligheten» Oslo kommune, Oslo 2019.

9. Pilot groups – dialogue and ideas



Photo: Sturla Bjerkaker

Pilot Group 1: Fubiak – Furuset Library and Activity Centre

A dialogue interview was made at the Oslo suburb of Furuset in cooperation with Oslo Municipality and the Deichman Library and Activity Centre Furuset.

We met 7 – 8 seniors at a local library- and activity centre: Ahmed (64), Ali (55), Susana (40), Elinda (74), Sepril (53), Ruth (85) and Solveig (70). It was a mixed and multicultural group.

We prepared with an interview guide for the session, but the dialogue became after a while quite open and flexible. We asked them about their experiences concerning voluntary engagement, and all of them with the exception of one had been quite active in voluntary organisations and voluntary work for many years. A distinction was made between being a member and active in the operation of an organisation and just active as a volunteer. Most of the seniors have been found for different reasons in the second

category. They like being engaged flexible ways, when they can decide the time to be active or not. They do not like feeling pressurized: You *must* come to the meeting tomorrow!

We organized the interview as a dialogue group. The management of the group were soft but structured. We had to calm down a member who were talking too much and to stimulate one or two that talked less. This is a common experience when we meet any group for dialogue, whether the purpose is narrow or wide. We meet people with high self-esteem and strong self-confidence, and we meet people for whom the situation is the opposite. We meet very experienced people (regarding for the tasks we are discussing) and we meet people with almost no knowledge about the subjects. Then, it is the leader's responsibility to balance the dialogue in such a way that everybody feels comfortable. This is not always easy, but our experience is that with a group of seniors it is easier than among a group of younger people.

The experience from Pilot Group could be summarized as:

- The group members are willing to learn “lifelong” and think – when they are persuaded – that you are never too old to learn.
- The group members are after a while determined to respect each other by listening carefully to each other's opinions and histories and accept being calmed down when they are talking too much.
- Talking about senior's contribution to voluntary work is easy.
- The dialogue group process has a value, because they learn from each other and get new ideas about contributions to their local communities.
- A structured, mild and calm but specific leadership is recommended, not an authoritarian, not *laisses faire* but a democratic approach.
- It is important that you establish consensus in the group about the way the dialogue should progress.



Photo: Tor Inge Martinsen

Pilot Group 2 – Velferden Senior Centre, Hamar

A central element of the Norwegian contribution was testing of group dialogues as a method to involve seniors in defining their own needs for activities. This democratic approach is based on the presumption that seniors can be more than just consumers of different activities - that they also can be an active part in defining content and organisational aspects.

A pilot group based on these principles was organised at Seniorsenteret Velferden, Hamar («Velferden» for short).

Velferden (<https://www.hamar.kommune.no/article36424-7846.html>) is funded by Hamar municipality and run by a foundation of local branches of NGOs.

This welfare centre offers a wide range of activities for seniors (from 60 – 100+ years): chess, dance, language classes (Spanish, French, English), bridge, choir, handicrafts/needlework etc.

The activities are on daytime and are mainly free.

Light meals (sandwiches, coffee/tea) are served.

Velferden has approx. 200 users each week – 80% consisting of women.

The participants for the dialogue group were recruited through the CEO of the welfare centre.

The 6 participants (2 men (Kai, Brede), 4 women (Wenche, Nina, Eva Marion, Bjørg)) were in the age-range 61 – 76 years. In addition: The CEO of Velferden and Mr. Tor Inge Martinsen (project partner, group leader).

Two of the group members were users, two served as volunteers at the centre while the two remaining participants had an outside view of the institution.

The two meetings in the dialogue group were held in a meeting room at the centre on two following Wednesdays in November 2019. Each of the sessions lasted approx. two hours.

The meetings in the group were based on the methods described in this project «Guide for Dialogue Group Leaders», including a survey form to map existing and new activities, with certain adaptations.

The first meeting started with a short introduction of the ProAge-project and an individual presentation from each of the participants (previous jobs, voluntary involvement, status as senior etc.).

The first meeting highlighted a description and analysis of the different activities offered at Velferden based on the survey. The discussion also centred around some major problems and challenges regarding activities for seniors in general, and more specifically the programme offered at Velferden:

- How do you promote the different activities?
- Which methods are most appropriate to reach the seniors who are isolated and inactive?
- What can you do to recruit «young seniors»? (<75 yrs).
- The centre is publicly funded. How can it help to reach public goals such as inclusion, integration, social equality?
- What can be done to avoid the excluding effect of insiders?

The dialogue involved, with some help from the group leader, all the participants and the discussion went fluently with engagement and enthusiasm.

This was confirmed in a short evaluation of the first meeting where it was unanimously underlined that the discussions had been exiting, open and involving.

As «homework» before the second meeting the participants were challenged to describe new activities based on the survey form in the guide for group leaders.

The second meeting on the following Wednesday also brought up some general questions regarding senior activities and more specifically the aims and purposes of Velferden:

- How can we define «life quality» - with reference to statutes regulating Velferden?
- Which group(s) of seniors should be given priority?
- How can the centre strengthen its cooperation with local branches of NGOs, public services etc.?

The participants had indeed done their «homework» and we compiled a long list of suggested activities based at the welfare centre:

- Lectures on current themes/issues? («Seniors university»).
- Yoga
- Book club – reading and group discussion on literature
- Outdoor activities – hiking in the local environment
- Cooking – healthy and sustainable food
- Language classes (for beginners)
- IT-learning (in the field of banking)

These are some of the main evaluation points from Pilot Group 2:

- Organised group discussions among seniors as a method to help defining their wishes and needs for activities is effective and suitable
- A group with this purpose should not be recruited from a homogenous platform: the discussions will benefit from inputs from different angles regarding the topics that are up for discussion
- The role of the group leader is of importance to help involvement from all participants

- More limited topics, such as «define seniors needs for activities», are closely linked with more principal problems regarding priorities, organisation and economy, and should be discussed within these frames

Pilot Group 3: Dialogue at Frogner Senior Arena



Photo: Sturla Bjerkaker

As a supplement to the survey, ProAge has conducted a deep interview with a group of persons at the Frogner Senior Arena in Oslo. They are Lillemor (88), Anne Marie (87), Eva (91), Ingerid (90), Torild (79) and Marthe (87).

Text and photos: Sturla Bjerkaker

The intention was to interview them about their voluntary involvement and activities throughout life. The more than one-hour conversation unveiled that there were a lot of information between the respondents about the forms and activities what they have been engaged in. In the course of the conversation which became more and more alive and crosswise, an increasing number of memories popped up. A couple of the ladies have had strokes or illnesses that have resulted in gaps in their memories.

Lillemor:

She has worked as an employee for long in the field of an offshore industry and speaks German, French, English and Norwegian. She had worked until she became 74 years old. She learned languages in high school and at work. She had as her ambition to study philosophy, but her father stopped that. At his deathbed, he said, "I've done a lot of wrongs to you, Lillemor..."

"I haven't been involved in anything," she says, but eventually it came up that she had been in a circle and a literature group at the centre that unfortunately was closed. Most people had joined to this group. At present she also takes part in the weekly Trim (i.e. physical exercise).

Anne Marie:

Comes from the city of Tønsberg and was for many years active in sports – especially gymnastics and handball. She has also been a member of the Deacon home friends and is a member of the Senior Norway. "I've signed up to get their songbook, then it triggered volunteering. We do sing a lot together.

She is also well known to the Norwegian Retired Association, a competitor of Senior Norway, but with common cause.

Anne Marie is not a member of the State Church, but active in the Lutheran Evangelical Denominations (DENK). She has worked at the Ullern Church and sung in the "Ullern Choir" (Ullern is a district in Oslo). She was living in England for a period of her life.

Eva:

-I was active in my teenage years as a scout, in the girls' scouts. Otherwise, we were in the habit of making our own clubs when we needed one. We were not tied to any specific organizations.

I have been in the same circles for 50 – 60 years. Otherwise, I am playing in a bridge club and take part in the "Trim" at the centre (everyone is joining this activity.)

The head of the weekly "Trim" is 95 years old and the most vigorous of us all!

Eva has had epilepsy and has developed a memory impairment over the last decades but otherwise she is in good shape. She joined Senior Dance at the centre when she retired but had to stop it because of her health. Senior Dance is great fun and a good physical exercise. We thought it was a little uncomfortable dancing with a lady, but we were good at bringing...

Eva has had a long career in Oslo SpareBank. I sang in Nordstrand School choir and in Storebrand's corporate choir.

Everyone has been to a certain degree engaged in computer issues and thus acquiring some digital competences. (and see both the negative and positive aspects of ICT.)

Ingerid:

She has also been singing, but not in a choir. Ingerid is an educated tailor-master and has worked in a fashion house in Paris. She was an orphan when 16 years old, grew up with her uncle and aunt, and has moved extensively throughout her life. She lived at a time in Catherine's home, belonging to the Dominican Order. She has her political views but has not been a member of any political party. No one in the group has had political memberships. – “I have been a member of the Sanitary Association and housewife, church and ward work.” In the literary group she was a member, too. Now she is less active but stays well oriented.

Marthe:

She graduated as a librarian. She was Director of the municipality's library board where she formally lived as a local citizen (Melhus) and was a librarian at SINTEF. She has also been in the Sanitary Association, literature group and discussion groups. "I was actively working for children and participated in teaching children how to brush teeth with fluoride. It's been a while since... She bore four children and has a large family - eight grandchildren. She has attended many courses, mostly in the free education (Tolk University) and even has been a teacher there.

She participates in Senior Academy meetings at Klingenberg Kino, where there is a full hall of interested participants every time.

Torild:

She finished High School at Trondheim Cathedral School and attended thereafter a school specialized training for home services.

She is not a member of the State Church but did not like either in the Human Ethical Association (HEF). She tells a story of a relative of hers who wanted to have a human-ethical burial, but still wished a Christian hymn in the ceremony. This was not accepted by the HEF, "a bit intolerant", evaluated by Torild. The hymns are part of our cultural treasure, she believes.

She graduated as a lawyer in her adulthood and worked in state services and NHO (Norw. Employers Org.), and she has also worked as a teacher.

Common to all or to the vast majority of participants:

They take part in age-friendly physical fitness programs (the trim) weekly at the centre
All have experience in singing songs for joy, with or without choir.

They are included in literary groups

They are not members of any political party but are socially and politically engaged and regularly vote in elections.

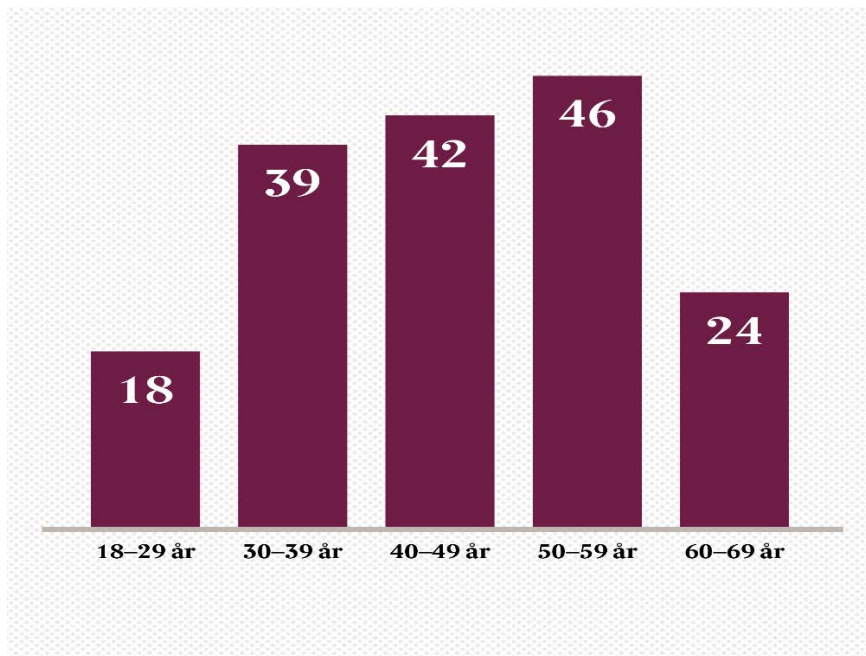
They have participated and are still attending courses and/or senior academies, most through the free education (folk University)

They have been for a long time in the community circles, sanitary association and/or housewife teams

They have been in church and/or have performed ward work

10. Seniors in society and politics

As Norway is a country with a strong voluntary sector, we also find both NGOs and political parties and other institutions for and by seniors. In this chapter we will just mention some examples and institutions where seniors are taking active part in society and politics. As a sort of curiosity, it can first be mentioned that the Norwegian Parliament (Stortinget) is a quite young assembly. The average age in 2017 was 46 years and the last 100 years it has not been higher than 54 (in 1961). This is in strong contrast to e.g. the United States, where most politicians – the president included, as we know – have passed 70 years of age. But that is another story. The oldest parliamentarian at Stortinget is 69 years old. The illustration below shows that only 24 percent of the politicians at Stortinget are aged 60 years or over.



The Pensioner's Party

In Norway, there is one political party which is founded specially to work for the interests of seniors. This party is called Pensjonistpartiet – the Pensioner's Party – and is very small. The party has no representatives at the Parliament.

The aim of the party is to gather women and men for a political work to create a society which is better to live in – for everybody. The party will work for the benefit of both older and younger groups in society with special emphasis for the situation of the weakest groups in

the society. The Pensioner's Party as an organisation and its individual members build their political work on the pillars of the Norwegian culture heritage, the constitution, the laws and the principles of the popular democracy. The party has a national steering board and is represented in all regions/counties in Norway.

Traditionally, the Norwegian political system contains of political parties which have a broad political platform – they have a policy covering most of the areas in society, including also the policy for seniors. In this sense, the Pensioner's Party is a special “flower” in the political landscape.



Jan Davidsen, here in front of the Norwegian Parliament, is president of the Pensjonistforbundet (Photo: Internet)

Strong NGO for seniors

The Norwegian Pensioners' Association - Pensjonistforbundet – is a big and strong NGO with around 200 000 individual members, many of those are retired trade unionists. It is politically independent but is known for its relatively tight links to the main trade union in Norway. The Association was established in 1951 and aims to increase the political influence of the elderly. It demands bargaining rights within the limits agreed on by the leading sector in collective pay negotiations. It also wants social security settlements considered by Stortinget (The Norwegian Parliament).

The Norwegian Pensioners' Association's vision is to be "clear, strong and visible"
The values of the organisation prioritise are: "Inclusion, co-determination and influence".
The organisation will – according to its constitution - be an open and secure organisation for all its members, building on the values of equality and respect in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation. The members are constituting the strength and the foundation which the organisation is built on.

The Norwegian Pensioners' Association defends democracy as a system of governing. Democracy only works when the whole population is represented and feels included. Co-determination means the opportunity to influence decisions that affect people's lives. User participation guaranteed through committees is an important democratic principle.

Every municipality works with senior citizens' councils which help elected bodies to make better decisions and are important to democracy. It is the Norwegian Pensioners' Association's remit to actively exercise political influence on behalf of the elderly in Norway.

Senior Norway

Senior Norway is a smaller NGO for promoting senior's interests in society. This NGO is also nationwide – with 11 local units - and has a bit less than 10 000 individual members. It was founded in 2002 as "Seniorsaken" and changed its name and profile in 2017 to Senior Norway (Senior Norge). The administration is in the capital of Oslo. Senior Norway is financed by membership fee, public funding, projects and juridical advice to the members.

Senior Norway is religious and political independent. The values upheld are respect, equality, participation and promoting the joy of life. The vision is "We create a senior friendly society!"

Senior Norway also works for seniors' access, ability and opportunity to stay as long as they wish in working life. In this context, a senior friendly lifespan policy and an inclusive working life is important. The organisation heavily supports establishing a "late career policy" for senior citizens.

Senior Norway has a cooperation with other seniors through the Senior's Umbrella Association (Seniorennes fellesorganisasjon), which was founded in 2010.

Councils for the Elderly

It is mandatory for all of the Norwegian 356 municipality councils and 11 county councils to establish and appoint members to a local/regional council for the elderly.

These councils' main purpose is to be an advisory body for the administration and politicians on municipality and county level in all matters of importance and relevance to the life of seniors.

As we previously have pointed out the elderly are underrepresented in political bodies on all levels in the Norwegian society. Councils for the elderly are partially meant to compensate for this deficiency by connecting seniors' views and opinions to ongoing political processes.

Members to a council for elderly are appointed by the municipality and county councils.

A typical council will have between 4 and 8 members and will hold office for 4 years, following the election periods of municipalities and counties.

The appointed members shall have a broad background and experience and the majority of its members must be 60+ years. If a council holds four or more members the gender-representation must be at least 40% (e.g. 5 members, 2 men 3 women).

The guidelines for the councils for the elderly underline that all matters of importance for seniors must be presented to and discussed by the elderly council. The council may also forward their own issues. The municipalities and counties provide administrative support for these councils.

A counselling body for the elderly may focus on both prioritised and more limited issues. These are examples on issues that typically will occur on the agenda of a council for the elderly:

- ✓ Transportation, access and availability
- ✓ Overall economic priorities (budget matters)
- ✓ Health care
- ✓ Social services
- ✓ Culture and sport activities
- ✓ Volunteerism
- ✓ Social inclusion and participation

A specific council for the elderly does not guarantee that seniors have a real opportunity to influence political decisions on municipality and county level. To what extent the bodies actually are included in political processes may vary a lot, and the strength and impact of the councils depend to a certain degree on how the administrations and politicians cooperate and link up with the councils and how the members are capable to forward issues related to the welfare of the elderly population in the community.



It is mandatory for all of the Norwegian 356 municipality councils and 11 county councils to establish and appoint members to a local/regional council for the elderly. (Photo: Internet)

13. References

- Bau-Madsen, Johanne (2008), Studiekredshåndbog, Folkevirke København
- Bjerkaker, Sturla (2006), Studieringen - det fornemme læringsverktøy, Abstrakt forlag Oslo
- Bjerkaker, Sturla and Summers, Judith (2006), Learning democratically – Using study circles, NIACE Leicester, UK
- Bjerkaker, Sturla (2014), Study Circles as tools for learning democracy, active citizenship and critical thinking (paper), Norwegian Association for Adult Learning, Oslo
- Boron, Carrie (2001?), Study Circles (paper), Everyday Democracy, New York.
https://www.civicus.org/documents/toolkits/PGX_B_Study%20CirclesFinalWeb.pdf
(downloaded: 2019.12.16.)
- Brattset, Hallgjerd (1982), What are the characteristics of the Study Circle? Norsk Voksenpedagogisk Institutt, Trondheim Norway
- “Dugnad for deltakelse – eldreinnsats i frivilligheten» (2019), Oslo
- Hopgard, Susan and Leeuwen, Fred van (eds) (2019), On Education & Democracy. 25 Lessons from the Teaching profession. Education International. Brussels
- Kaplan, Jonathan (2009), Research Results on Self-Direction in Study Circle (paper), ESREA, Stockholm (Sweden)
- Martinsen, Tor Inge (2008), Deltaker – et hefte for deg som er deltaker i studieringer om foreldrerollen, VOFO, Oslo.
- Martinsen, Tor Inge (2008) Ringleder – et hefte for deg som skal lede studieringer om foreldrerollen, VOFO, Oslo.
- Oliver, Len (2000?), The power of study circles in civil society, Oliver Associates, Washington DC
- The World Population Ageing Report (2019), United Nations, New York
- Verbeek, Clare (2002) Develop the leader in you – A manual for study groups developing leadership skills, IDASA
- ¹«Volunteering by older people in the EU ", (2002) Publication Office of the European Union, Luxembourg



Attachment 1

Voluntary engagement among seniors

Seniors involvement in and for voluntary organisations

The following report is prepared and compiled by Sturla Bjerkaker in cooperation with Frivillighet Norge (the Association for voluntary organisations in Norway) as an attachment to the Norwegian partner's Handbook for the project Promoting Active Ageing - ProAge.

Content

1. Foreword
2. Background
3. Survey- reply with Comments
4. Summary
5. Attachment
 - a. Appendix to Questionnaire
 - b. Questionnaire
 - c. Interview at Senior Centre

Preface

Figures from the Norwegian Public Agency for Statistics (SSB, 2018) on ageing tell that the number of seniors beyond 70 will be increasing with 21 percent up to 2040. The share in 2018 was only 12 percent. The growth will be especially high for those aged 80 and over and strongest in rural areas. In 2040 around 35 percent of the Norwegian population will be 70 years or older.

The Norwegian parliamentarian G.J. Bekkevold, (Christian Democrat), states in the newspaper Aftenposten (20.08.2019) that "In the future we have to take more responsibility for our own ageing process". What does this mean? The interpretation may go to different directions: The constantly growing proportion of older people in the years to come will be posing a serious challenge to the public sector's capability to cope with the situation. Secondly there is a recognition in what he says: That elderly not only get older, but keep themselves in a good shape much longer, and therefore they will better be able to take responsibility for their own lives and wellbeing.

"While it has been normal to think about elderly people as receivers of voluntary services, their own contribution as volunteers have had much less awareness." This we can read in a

report on elderly and volunteerism from the European Union (2011).¹⁴ "Their latent potential for voluntary engagement should be recognized and supported." Social inclusion of elderly people through voluntary engagement has come to be a new challenge. It is still a lack of political awareness about the elderly's potential " highlights the report.

This is very much the foundation for the following text, based on the survey ProAge has done together with Frivillighet Norway (*The Association of Voluntary Organisations in Norway*). Our starting point is that senior's engagement in the voluntary sector has a double reward:

Firstly, seniors that keep themselves socially and psychically active, live longer and have less health problems.

Secondly, voluntary organizations that recruit and engage seniors as members have positive results from their experiences and contributions.

Our survey and our answers will confirm this conclusion.

¹⁴«Volunteering by older people in the EU ", Publication Office of the European Union, Luxembourg 2011.

Background

During the period from May to June 2019, *Frivillighet Norge* and Sturla Bjerkaker on behalf of the EU-project Preparation for Active Ageing (ProAge)¹⁵ conducted a survey among *Frivillighet Norges* member organizations on the attitudes and views of the voluntary organizations to older members, whether they can be considered as resources in their associations.

The background of the survey is multi-faceted. Hypothesis formed in the ProAge project is stating that the elderly who are engaged and stay active in a voluntary organization demonstrate increased level of quality of life and remain mentally and physically healthy for a longer time.

In addition, it is a known fact that the proportion of seniors has been growing in the population, as well as the NGO sector's demand for volunteering activities, as not just the seniors need voluntary assistance for themselves.

The survey

284 forms (*questionnaires*) were sent out and 107 were filled in and sent back, that makes an approximately 40 percent response rate. Responses were distributed through 36 central/national organizations and 71 from different organizational levels, and from different organizations. The response rate was satisfactory. The answers are anonymous. A random selection of Norwegian NGOs responded. Representativity was not the main criterion of the survey, nevertheless a broad range of responses telling about a multitude of activities and programs for and among members 62+ years have been collected.

Answers are given in both the number of respondents and percentage. When these numbers in some places are congruent, it is because the number of respondents is close to 100.

¹⁵«Preparation for the Active Ageing"– ProAge – is an EU Erasmus + project (2018-2020) coordinated by the Hungarian municipality Alsomocsolad. The partners in the project come from Hungary (2), Slovenia (1) and Norway (1). Norwegian partner is Bjerkaker LearningLab, a single NGO company operated by Sturla Bjerkaker with partners. The overall goal of ProAge is to look at various activities and solutions that can ensure an active and qualitative old age for seniors 62 +.

Conceptual usage

We mainly use commonly accepted terms in this report. Regarding the term "elderly" it is a debated concept. The word is really "old — older — oldest," but in daily understanding "old" is older than "elderly." The term "senior" has slipped into the language as the designation of the older part of the population, but there are different understandings of what is a minimum age limit for seniors. The Centre for senior policy is down to "50 +", organizations such as Senior nett and Senior Norway are happy to discuss "65 +". The official retirement age has recently been raised from 67 to 70 years. In this report we take the starting point in "62 +".

Seniors are therefore in our study the common designation of those who have passed 62 years.

N = means the number of replies (respondents) to the individual questions.

"Volunteer" and "volunteering" have slightly different meanings in Norwegian. It can be read both as voluntary efforts understood as aid and charity, preferably from person to person, or it can mean voluntary efforts and involvement as a member in a voluntary organization. In this report, the understanding of "voluntary" is related to those who are members in NGOs.

Voluntary centrals organized by municipalities are not a part of our survey.

(Photo: DNT South)



Main findings

NGOs will have seniors as members and most have a variety of activities and programs that specifically target seniors, both to get them volunteering and – equally important – as elected officials in the organization. This is among the many findings of this survey on senior involvement in and for NGOs.

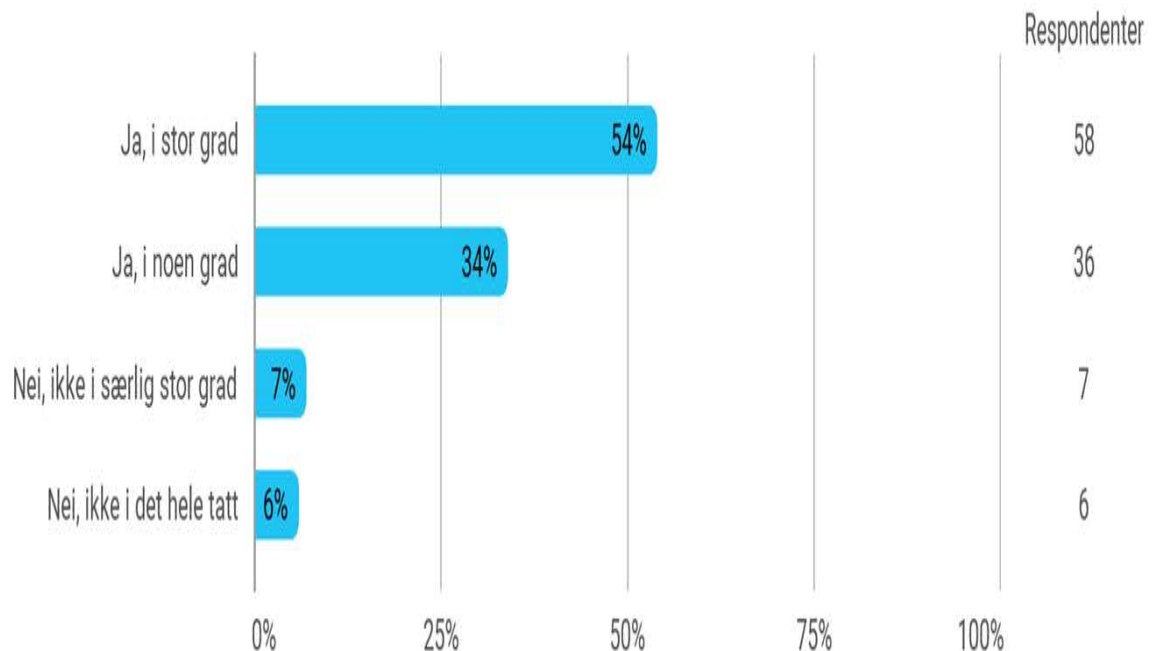
Seniors are considered important resources, regardless of the purposes of the organizations.

Those NGOs that have offers especially for seniors has given the answer that the provision of training courses and social activities get the highest score on what works well for their senior members.

The Survey – Answers and comments

In the survey we posed a few but important questions to voluntary organizations in Norway about their relations to seniors as members. The questions, comments and answers follow below.

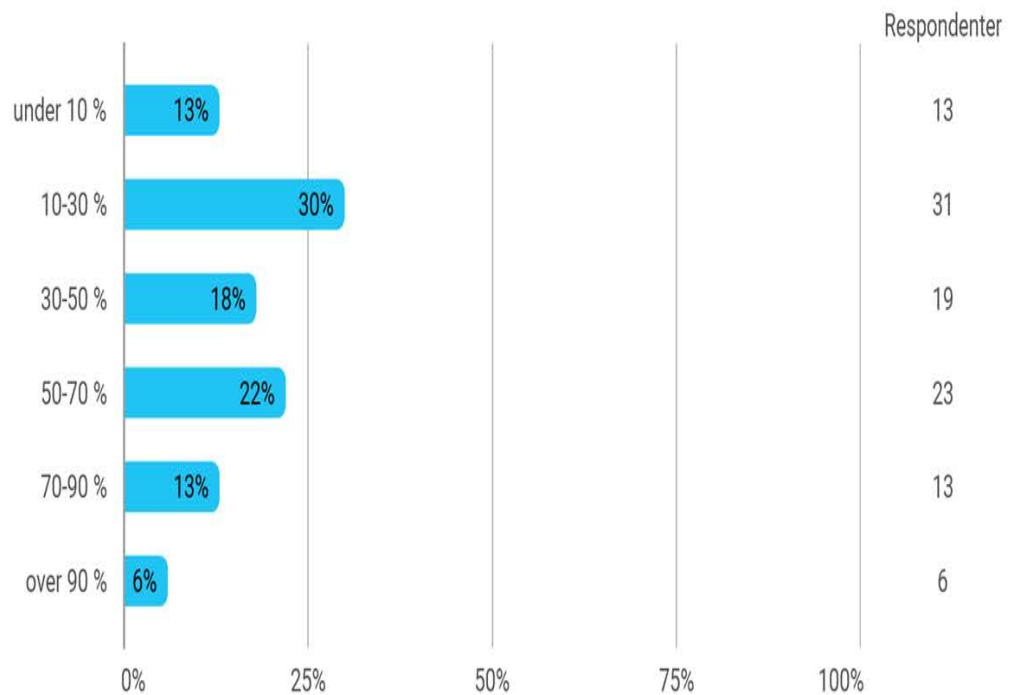
1. Are Seniors an important target group as members of your organization?



Almost 90 percent answered that seniors make an important membership group for them, while only 13 percent answered that seniors are in a little degree or not at all important.

Considering the senior profile of the survey, it is not particularly surprising that a clear majority agreed that seniors are important or very important members. If there is no predominance of senior-profile organizations in the material, it is still interesting to register that the organizations look at the elderly as an important target group. The answers to the open questions in the survey reflect that seniors are considered an important asset, regardless of the organizations' purposes. See specifically the answers to question 12.

2. How many of your organization's members do you estimate is over 62 years?



N: 107

Many respondents thought that it was difficult to give exact answers here, because they do not file information about the members' age and therefore do not have a sufficient background material. But we ask for "estimates" and the information must be taken with this as a disclaimer.

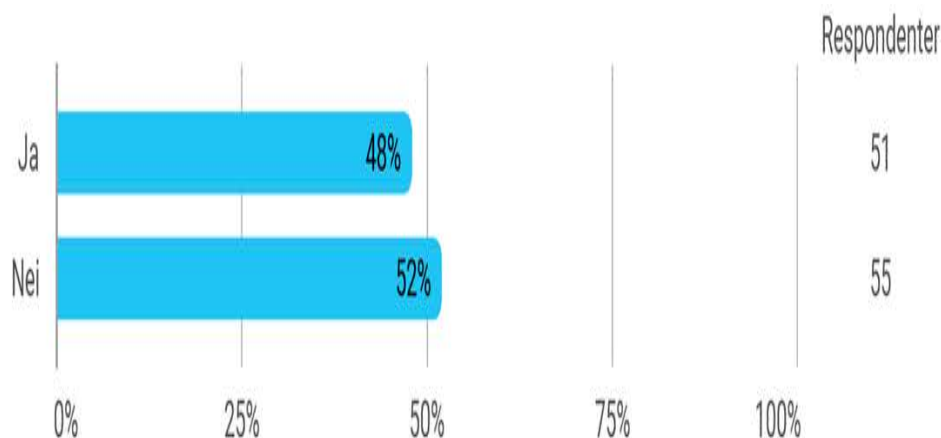
Only 19 out of 107 organisations responded that 70 percent or more of their members are over 62 years of age. 23 organizations say 50-70 percent are over 62 years, 19 organizations say 30 – 50 percent are over 62 years, while 44 organizations respond that the proportion of members over the age of 62 is from 10 – 30 percent.

Nearly half of the survey participants report that one out of three of their members is over 62 years. The comments under the preceding questions probably confirm that organisations with a senior profile are not overrepresented in the survey.



(Photo: Internet)

3. Does your organization have special offers and activities to members over 62 years?



N: 106

Here the answers are, as we see, divided: 48 percent answer 'yes' – that they have such offers, while 52 percent responds 'no'. From other responses, however, the "no-answers" have offers that also seniors can take advantage of, but these are not offerings exclusively for seniors, but programs for all age groups in the organization may.

4. If so, which of these offers (to members over 62 years) would you say work well?

N: 51

Respondents list 90 individual activities and offers in response to this question. Several of the activities and replies are similar and overlapping. Despite the diversity of NGOs in Norway many programs seem like each other.

For example, umbrella organisations and their sub-organisations are well known to each other and thereby we easily get quite the same offers from organization to organization, at least within the same organization category. But this could just be a positive force in the field.



Photo: Internet

In order to clarify the various activity opportunities, we have chosen to structure the answers of the following questions in the survey into six categories. Answers are ranked by the highest/lowest number of activities offered. The numbers in brackets represent the number of activities/offers under each category:

1. Courses and other training (25)
2. Social activities and offers (25)
3. Tours and travel (15)
4. Music and other culture activities (10)
5. Financial offers (5)
6. Others (5)

Offerings regarding of the different types of courses, seminars and lectures (1) score – along with social activities and offers – highest on what works well for senior members of those organisations that have programming specifically for them. There are a multitude of course offerings mentioned: First aid, digital skills, language, crafts, dance and movement, singing and genealogy.

Social activities and offerings (2) cover a wide range of field and embrace everything from dinner meetings with coffee at the elderly centre to birthday celebrations.

"Themed events with relevant topics, food, humour, song and devotional forms– and a great committee that welcomes and gives a good hug to all who come." And «pensioner Café once a month.... With very good feedback from participants who are joining".

Tours and travel (3) mapping display a variety - from short bus tours in their own municipality to longer bus tours for "Swedish trade" and other overseas tours. Tours and travel are often combined with visiting cultural and educational facilities (themed trips), but also with social activities (staying at a health resort). Hiking trips are also mentioned. Here we know, as an example, that the Norwegian Trekking Association (DNT) has special offers for seniors.



Photo: DNT South

«Do you miss someone to go on a trip with? DNT Senior is our offer to good adults aged 60 years and above. Senior groups across the country organise activities from simple tours of the surrounding area to overnight mountain hikes. (Photo: DNT South)

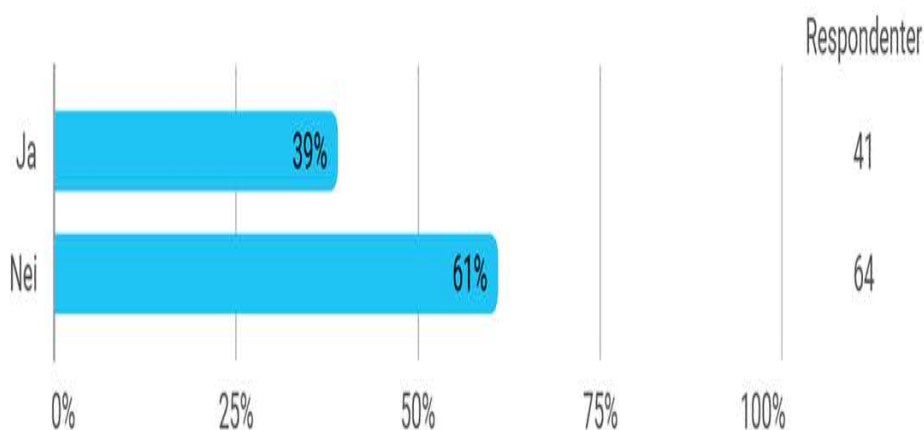
Others are not as ambitious as DNT, when they answer "Bingo, intoxication (???)", while another respondent answers "... Daytrips every Tuesday at. 12.00 all year round.... Very good support. "

Music and other culture (4) scores relatively low and contain essentially choir activities. Here "senior dance" may have been included, but we have in this report chosen to list this activity under "courses and other training". "Senior Dance Norway" is a member organisation of the study association "Culture and Tradition" and their activities are registered there.

Financial programmes (5) include member discounts and insurance offers.

Other programmes (6) are volunteer jobs and meeting places and support groups for people with dementia and their relatives. "We have volunteer jobs both individually and in groups. The entire Norwegian population is being invited" is one of the answers that reflects an ambitious attitude.

5. Is your organization planning special efforts to engage more members over 62 years in the organisation's activities?



N: 105

Here 39 percent answered 'yes' and 61 percent stated 'no'. Two out of five organisations have their own plans for engaging more seniors to their organisation. This suggests they look at seniors as an important resource for their organization, and deliberately work towards making seniors more active. Three out of five say they don't plan special measures. The latter ones feel they do

not have to strive to obtain satisfactory membership support among older. Others say that they do not have seniors as a target group.



Photo: Internet

6. If so, can you give examples of such offers?

N: 41

61 offers are mentioned in the list compiled by the 41 organizations that have responded 'yes'.

The division follows the same six categories as in question 4 above. Answers are ranked by the highest/lowest number of activities offered. The numbers in brackets represent the number of activities/offers under each category:

1. Other, incl. various recruitment initiatives (18)
2. Courses and other kinds of training (12)
3. Social activities and offers, incl. physical activities (10)

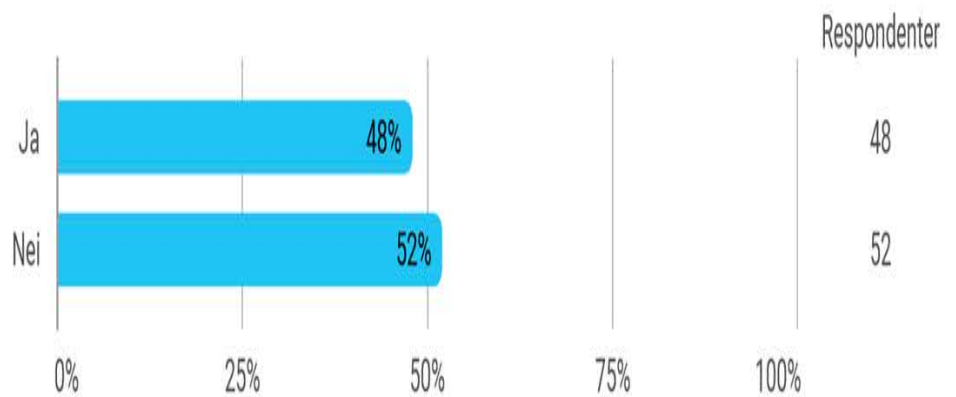
4. Music and other culture activities (6)
5. Tours and travel (5)
6. Financial offers (2)

Close to half of the respondents provide one or preferably more offers to engage and recruit more seniors to their organization. Recruitment generally mentioned by the most (18). Let's see a few illustrations depicting various initiatives: "actively recruiting in arenas where seniors are staying," whether in different senior centres or at shopping centres. Another respondent gives a "Caution Yes from us, as we are working with voluntary preparedness, prevention and rescue service and we are focusing on potential joiners coming from the ambulance service, police and fire departments after retiring at a special age, preferably in their late fifties, they can be good resources for us... »

The category "Courses and other kinds of training" scores high (12) also as a method of recruitment and means of increased engagement. A respondent mentions "lifelong learning" as very important: You never get too old to learn. It is evident that many of the respondents are NGOs who place great emphasis on the schooling and training of their members. A respondent reports: "We see the possibility of using seniors in supporting and training new members", or «We teach seniors to use data and digital tools". Language courses and courses in yoga are other offers mentioned.

Social activities and offers are also scoring high (10) and include physical activities such as using an "Outdoor trim trail". Trimming groups for seniors are highlighted by several respondents. "We're constantly working to get more tours, recreational walks and hiking experiences. The best ambassadors are the ones that go weekly on tour". "We also see that many seniors are now constantly improving physically and are likely behave as skilled exploration crews with us promoting physical fitness" answers another respondent, confirming what many people are experiencing, that there is a lot of competence and resources in the senior society.

7. Does your organization have a plan to recruit more seniors as enhancing volunteerism moving forward?



(N = 100)

This question goes a little further than the foregoing one. Here we not only ask about engaging more seniors as members but recruiting more seniors who can be mobilized for volunteer efforts and be appointed to the positions of trust in the organization.

52% (52) replies that they have no such plans, while 48% (48) responds 'yes'. The fact that nearly half of the respondents have plans to recruit more seniors for this purpose is a clear sign that not only the strong growth in the number of seniors, but also the growth of open-minded and energetic seniors have been taken into consideration.

This is also in line with Oslo Municipality's senior policy and their project "Volunteer for participation – older adults' efforts in volunteering" in which organisations and municipalities collaborate to recruit more of Oslo's 73 000 retirees into volunteering. "The older generation has never been bigger, fresher, better educated or had more to spend than today» the project description states.¹⁶

8. If so, what actions are you going to implement or continue with?

(N = 48)

The 48 respondents who do have plan for action, listed 65 different activities. As the question has been phrased, both existing and new initiatives could have been mentioned. The answers are distributed following the same structure as in the

¹⁶www.oslo.kommune.no/politikk-og-administrasjon/prosjekter

preceding questions and ranked by the highest/lowest number of types of activity offerings.

1. Social activities and offers (16)
2. Other offers (12)
3. Courses and other training (8)
4. Music and other culture activities (5)
5. Tours and travel (2)
6. Financial offers (0)

Many NGOs struggle with the recruitment of both members or elected officials, and active volunteers. It also goes ahead of the answers to this question. Several respond that they want more volunteers in all age groups, not just seniors.

Social activities (1) score highest among the measures mentioned, and here we talk about arranging special recruitment programs, other gatherings, fun activities and other initiatives for inclusion that create wellbeing. Other ideas and activities were mentioned: A greeting card "gatherings for this group", another warehouse "cosy spots for seniors", and "Spring bazaar" and "Christmas Fair".

Other topics (2) include the use of social media, Facebook, Frivillig.no and the website of Volunteering Norway. According to senior grids ¹⁷, there are hundreds of thousands of seniors who are not online or are uncomfortable with the use of the Internet and social media. Different organizations – such as “Senior Net Norway” and others – make a great effort to remedy this. Active use of the Internet and social media for recruitment is a way to increase the digital competence of seniors, and thus also the confidence to be part of social activities that organisations offer and need. Some people make «referral campaigns" and another answer notes that we "want to increase the activity of volunteers so that employees have more time for their tasks".

¹⁷Senior grids are a voluntary organization with local associations across the country and nearly 10 000 members. See www.seniornett.no

The relationship between members, elected officials and employees can be an interesting tension field in many NGOs.



Photo: DNT

In courses and other (3) training, eight offers are mentioned. Developing skills is also regarded as a way of recruiting volunteers, not just as an offer for those who already are members. Many members look at schooling and learning as a good basis for increased engagement, e.g. as elected officials. Offers of organisational development courses, board work and meeting management are in this context good and relevant measures. A respondent reports: "Presenting skills development, courses in English and German, inclusive courses". Another respondent: "Gatherings to collect new ideas, information and knowledge proliferation. All these are training methods to get seniors on the team".

Music and other culture activities (4) score low here. But some of the offers are exciting: Sarpsborg Jazz club, New Orleans Workshop and Asker Jazz club also organise jazz festivals in Greece and Croatia in collaboration with the travel company Apollo. Here I believe the main target group is over 62 years. Fully booked planes, lots of artists and lots of people are travelling down a week to gather around the music in warmer parts of the world ...» Here music and travel form a combination. New Orleans and traditional jazz have many followers in the age group of 60, so these programs hit the target audience.

9. If no, what is the reason why you are not planning to recruit more seniors as volunteers?

(N = 52)

Approximately half of the respondents replied that they do not have special plans to recruit more seniors. A respondent explains it this way: "... We have mostly sufficient number of volunteer seniors ". This is representative of quite a few, who say that it is not so difficult to recruit seniors to volunteer work and it can easily be done when needed." Recruiting younger members is a bigger challenge. "There are often people with long professional careers behind them who are now got engaged in volunteer work in the community" answers another. "They (seniors) are already well represented" adds another respondent. And a third: "A great many of our volunteers are seniors, we have a plan to recruit younger." One more quote: "They come to us regularly, so we have pretty much available volunteer seniors at any time." "They hear about our organisation directly from their friends who are volunteering here, or from our network news, as they follow the website of the frivillig.no." answers one respondent.

The answers cannot be interpreted as if the organisations intentionally do not want new members. The opinion that "we do not (have) the focus on age; Anyone can become a member " is probably representative.

In the case of voluntary cultural organizations, some of the answers in this survey correspond with findings made by the Centre for Research on Civil Society and the Voluntary Sector. In the research report *Volunteering in Public and Publicly Funded Cultural Institutions* from 2018 on, Dag Wollebæk organizations has been asked to

describe the age groups and gender composition of their volunteers.¹⁸

"When it comes to the age distribution of the volunteers there is a clear predominance of persons over 40 years. Only 16 percent of the institutions state that most of their volunteers are under the age of 25. Here the cultural institutions distinguish themselves from the voluntary sector, where volunteers are evenly spread across different age groups (...). Volunteering within the cultural institutions is dominated by the elderly, this finding complies with British studies showing that the majority is over 55 years, and a very few young people are involved in the activity. 70 percent of volunteers in Garbergs' study¹⁹ Examination of Museum Volunteers responded that they would be volunteers because they want an active retirement. As the elderly population increases and they have better health and higher educational attainment, the potential for recruiting volunteers in this group can increase. However, there are considerable differences between types of institutions. The main category, the libraries, activates primarily volunteers over 40 years. Music institutions and performing arts attract fewer seniors and more younger ones. In Garberg's study, as many as 92 percent of volunteers were over 60 years of age, while only 8 per cent were under 60. »²⁰

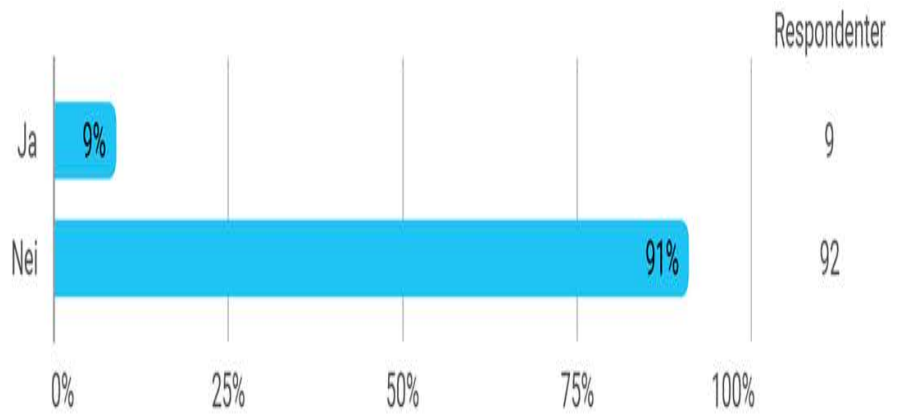
In Garberg's investigation, the seniors themselves are respondents. It is interesting that the answers (still) match well with our findings.

10. Is there anything in your organization that prevents seniors from performing voluntary efforts?

¹⁸ This applies to volunteerism associated with public institutions (civic volunteering) and not volunteering in the voluntary sector as such, such as sport, festivals, etc.

¹⁹ Hegseth Garberg, A. S. (2012) Frivillige i friluftsmuseer

²⁰ Dag Wollebæk volunteerism in public and publicly funded cultural institutions (2018) Report Centre for Research on civil society and voluntary Sector Bergen/Oslo.



N: 101

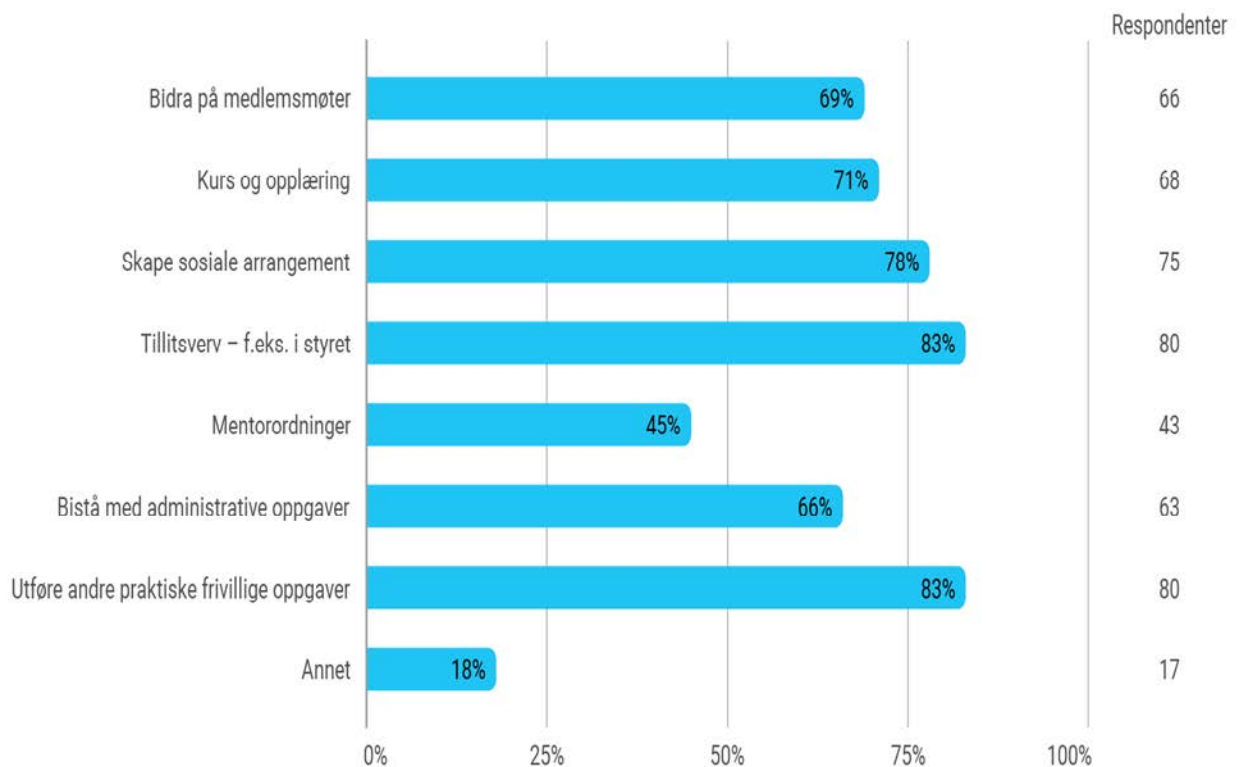
Here only 9 percent answer 'yes', and a large majority (91%) shares the view 'no'. Another result would have been surprising regarding the fact that NGOs in Norway follow the principle to be open and democratic and all who identify with the organization's purpose can become a member. However, there can now be practical reasons why some members and groupings are unable to perform volunteer work. See Q. 11.

11. If so, what could this be?

N: 9

One respondent replied that "our activity is at night and involves time before being called and a minimum level of physical fitness". Other points out that they do not have premises that meet the requirements of universal design. Others respond that they have members with poor health who have "enough problems to cope with. " They "can't be volunteers". Or, "Volunteer management takes a lot of time and goes beyond our core tasks." Lack of universal design -including in terms of premises- is thus a major reason why seniors are not fully able to perform voluntary efforts for their organization or for society in general. Accessibility is an important point as physical disability is overrepresented in the older part of the population.

12. How can seniors be a volunteer resource in your organization? Possible to select multiple options.



N: 107

Here 80 respondents (83%) agree that seniors are important as board members and in other positions of trust. Otherwise, it is strongly emphasised that older members are important to perform other practical volunteer tasks — tasks that are always important in keeping associations and teams operating. It is interesting to note that taking on the positions of trust and being on practical tasks is considered equally important.

Both are the pillars of the life in an organisation, and it is interesting to register that seniors are also the key contributors performing such tasks.

Here it may be relevant to draw forth the government's quality reform document for the elderly; "Living your entire life" ("Leve hele livet"). The report comments on the efforts of volunteering:

"The total contribution of the community from retirement through formal and informal volunteer work is in a survey estimated at well 45 000 man-years of effort, or just over 25 billion NOK in 2016. The survey concludes that the potential for further contributions from retirees is huge, and that the total contribution can almost be doubled towards 2030. However, it assumes more targeted recruitment, organization

and facilitation through various organisational forms in public and private directing.

"21

There is no other way interpreting this that the public authorities will take steps to facilitate the participation of senior citizens in the future.

Seniors are also important for creating and implementing social initiatives such as event organising, etc. within the associations. A total of 75 (78%) emphasizes this, while "Contributing to courses and other training" scores 71% (68 replies). Nearly half – 43 responses (45%) – mention that the elderly are important contributors in mentoring. Here, seniors can contribute with their experience and knowledge as mentors for new members.

Without having direct coverage for this in our material, we know that especially in organizations of and for the disabled and chronically ill, seniors are also seen as equal persons.²² This finding has also been highlighted in the survey from 2011 about "Volunteering by Older People in the EU": "To reach older people who are not yet involved as equal person - " gatekeepers "can help. A "gatekeeper" is – in this context – a person who is usually already active and engaged, thereby helping to bridge the gap between the already involved and possible new volunteers...".

In the research project *Voluntary Efforts and Motivation in Norway and Scandinavia*, the focus is drawn to the importance of the inhabitants turning to be good facilitators as a significant way to stimulate increased voluntary engagement locally,²³ For better promotion the municipalities ought to develop a volunteer policy in dialogue with the NGOs to stimulate increased dialogue and interaction. In 2019, only 15% of the

²¹Notify. St. 15 (2017 – 2018) *Living your entire life — a quality reform for the elderly*

²²*The system of equal persons is a system that relies on experienced members to help new members cope and live with their disability. Read more about the equal person's scheme. Here: <http://nifs-stamming.customer.enonic.io/likepersonsordningen>*

²³*Strømsnes Kristin Henriksen Lars Skov, Svedberg, Lars - Civic Engagement in Scandinavia. Volunteering, Informal Help and Giving in Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Springer Forlag 2019.*

municipality has adopted such a policy.

13. If you were to give advice to other NGOs to recruit and engage new members and volunteers among seniors, what would your best advice be?

N: 107

This "open question" seems to have struck well, and the feedback contain 78 items. "Elderly must be thought as a resource" is repeatedly mentioned. The elderly has accumulated vast amount of experience and knowledge that comes in handy in virtually any voluntary context. We have sorted out the advices from the respondents in the following rough categories:

a. Seniors as resources

"Give the seniors tasks that are meaningful to the age group...", and many say it is important "to see" the seniors where they are, because "participating in volunteer work makes sense," it triggers energy and more motivation, especially when their professional skills are got used. Another good advice is that life experience equips the elderly to look "clearly for the need of people especially corresponding to tasks to be done in order to satisfy them". In other words, it seems clear that the respondents view the elderly as very significant resources in their organizations. It is important to take care of those who have been long within the organisation. They can share experiences and stories that are of value and "they often willingly continue contributing when they experience that their resources are wanted in the team." And: "Be clear about expressing the need for the professional competences many of these have." Because: "This is a resourceful group. They have more time to offer than the 40-50-year olds and seek ways to have meaningful involvement after their professional career. "

"Take care of the seniors, they are a fantastic resource", summarizes a respondent.

b. Seniors are stable and experienced

“The seniors are stable members. You can trust them.” This notion is commonly expressed throughout the answers, although a respondent states that “...Retirees are for some reason very busy, and some do not want to commit themselves.”

Another believes that «...It is important to take care of those who have been long standing members of the association.

Oslo Red Cross has conducted a survey showing that seniors stand longer in their volunteer positions than young people. The older you are when you start as a volunteer, the longer you remain in your organization. People who were between the ages of 18 – 25 when they started as a volunteer had an actual period of 595 days on average as volunteer. Volunteers who started when they were aged 65 years old or older were active for over 1365 days (3.7 years). These are figures from 2016/2017. The figures stem from an analysis of 13 activities of the Red Cross and are based on the content of the Red Cross ' database of volunteers (DiBa.)²⁴

This confirms the conclusion written under point B above.

c. Exemption on facilitation for seniors

"To engage seniors, it is important to be inclusive" many of the organisations emphasize. But – one respondent underpins - "This applies to all member groups, regardless of age."

Other respondents advise organisations to conduct surveys and needs analyses among seniors and rely on the findings in design activities that hit the target audience "home".

A respondent highlights the social aspects the organization brings with, "that is what we believe is the most important thing we can offer...».

Another respondent will not recommend activities to do "early in the morning"(!), while several others emphasize the importance of «...providing a pleasant and friendly culture”.

²⁴Report «Historism at the Time of Volunteers in the Oslo Red Cross, Stein Viggo Moe, Oslo Red Cross Oslo 2017.

It may, as another mention, also be important to enable accessibility and «facilitate the hearing-impaired persons in meetings.»²⁵

Another says, “use mapping and explore what the seniors themselves think they can contribute.”

It is a firm belief that the organizations have been sitting on an undiscovered "treasure" of resources! "

d. Offer benefits and flexibility

One recommendation is to “...provide small benefits, such as free coffee when one is "at work". "And once a year we have as a tradition to invite all volunteers to a party. Then there is the provision of warm food, wine and entertainment.” - is the advice from another respondent. It is important to respect that many people do not want to "bind themselves" e.g. to one specific volunteer day of the week. Seniors want flexibility, it is one of the "gifts" they get by becoming retirees. Another has reminded that senior volunteers deserve much more in return for their presence and contribution”.

Comment from the side-line

The Centre for Research on civil society and the voluntary sector points to a report from 2017 that “higher demands for formal applications and reporting for obtaining government grants can help organisations recruit volunteers with experience from economics and management... ". We have previously pointed out that many seniors are welcomed to the organisations precisely because they have experience and knowledge – which can certainly also be used for applications and reporting, as more grant arrangements are project-based. This has been a trend over several years, which many organisations have experienced as a challenge. It can therefore be advantageous that senior members can use their competence to contribute to good project applications.

²⁵The Hearing-impaired Association in Norway is the world's largest volunteer organization for the hearing impaired with its 66 000 members. It is not because we have particularly many hearing-impaired people in Norway, but that we are very far ahead when it comes to voluntary organization in virtually any area.

It may seem like a paradox, but for many NGOs, it is forwarded to pursue seniors — as members, as elected officials, as volunteers, or resources in any other way. It provides stability, predictability and reliability.

Courses and forms of training are emphasised as important means and are an integral part of many NGOs. Many seniors display already well-developed skills when they enter the association, therefore there is no need to charge the course budget. They can go straight into their tasks. On the other hand, the significance of lifelong learning is also emphasized. Brain teasers are just as important as physical exercises.

Today's world – whether you are in an association or not – requires a level of digital competence that many seniors still need developing. Here we meet a particularly important area for learning and mentoring. Over 300 000 seniors are nowadays lacking the most important and essential digital skills – to handle their bank issues.

Deichman 's Main Library in Oslo has conducted focus group meetings and interviews with seniors about their digital life. Most people who are aware of the need on their bodies — so to speak — do not feel like attending courses where a younger person teaches a group, but they would prefer one-on-one or two-on-two guides. Some emphasize that a digitally competent senior together with a school student – who has received digital competence through breast milk – can be a good learning couple²⁶. Others emphasize that courses (group learning) are the best:

Explanations of participation in voluntary work

The report from 2018, *the Centre for Research on civil society and voluntary sector*²⁷ asks the question: "What does voluntary participation explain?" Some of the findings from this report are interesting also in pure context:

²⁶Deichman received 2018 and 2018 funds from the National Library to look at senior digital competence and to make assessments of the role of the library in that context. The project is part of the campaign Digital Festival, which is held under the auspices of libraries and Senior grids. Focus group meetings and interviews were conducted in the autumn of 2018 and winter 2019.

<https://www.ks.no/kommunespeilet/forskning-og-innovasjon/--det-er-ikke-sa-vanskelig-som-det-ser-ut/>

²⁷Centre for Research on civil society and Voluntary Sector report 2018:2 author/Author Audun Fladmoe, Karl Henrik Sivesind and Daniel Arnesen title/Title updated figures on voluntary efforts in Norway, 1998 – 2017

"... In addition to gender differences, previous studies have shown, among other things, that the proportion of people working voluntarily is the greatest among those in the middle of life, that highly educated participants do voluntary work more frequently than those with low education, and that having children increases the likelihood of working voluntarily (). ... 73 percent of those between 35- and 49-years state having performed voluntary work during the past year. This is almost 20 percentage points higher than among those in the retirement age (67 – 79 years). An important explanation of why the level is highest among those in the middle of life is that many people in this age group do work in the context of children's activities. Among those who are between 60 and 66 years, there is a distinct gender difference, in which 60 percent of the men and 50 percent of women participate in volunteer work. Among the very oldest and the very youngest, the level of voluntary work is quite similar for women as for men. ... Within the sport, 41 percent of those between 35 and 49 years responded that they have participated in volunteer work, while the proportion was only 11 percent among those who are 67 years or older. ... Within welfare and community-oriented organisations, there is a tendency to a reverse curve, where the youngest and oldest participate most (but the differences are small). Within religion and spirituality there is a tendency for the very oldest to participate most. "²⁸

In their survey, there are individuals who are respondents, while in our project the organizations have been asked. Two different perspectives, but with convergence in conclusions regarding seniors' participation. Their study is indeed a good supplement, because they have examined gender differences in voluntary activities. This has been no specific topic in our survey.

²⁸ Folkestad et al. 2015



*At one of the senior centres in Oslo they have portraits of all their permanent visitors.
Photo: Sturla Bjerkaker*

Summary

More than 100 NGOs have been included in this study on senior involvement in the Norwegian society's organisational life. Through the full range of our survey the results have made it possible to draw some conclusions, both regarding the organizations' attitudes to seniors as volunteers and on the value of having them as active members.

"Take care of the seniors, they constitute a fantastic resource," says one respondent, summarizing with this short phrase what many of the other organizations also are expressing.

In Oslo municipality's recent project "*For participation – older efforts in volunteering*" it is stated that the "older generation has never been more numerous, fresher, better educated or had more resources to spend than today." ²⁹ something many NGOs obviously have caught up.

What are the organizations expressing? Among other things, this:

Two out of five organizations have specific plans to engage more seniors to their organization. This suggests that they are looking at seniors as an important resource for the organisation, but that they also aware of the needing to take a few steps to get seniors more active.

Organisations will have seniors as members and most of them have a variety of activities and offerings that specifically target this group, both to get them volunteering and – just as important – being elected officials in the organization needs further efforts. One has for a while been talking about a crisis in organizational life regarding recruiting new trustees. Seniors can be part of the solution to this problem.

It is also important to note that organizations consider seniors as important resources, regardless of the purposes of the organizations.

Several organisations have offers and activities specially adapted for seniors. We note that training and social activities score the highest on the activity list what works well.

²⁹www.oslo.kommune.no/politikk-og-administrasjon/prosjekter

Development of leadership skills, schooling is also regarded as a way of recruiting volunteers, not just simply sending an offer to those who are already within the organisation.

Close to half of the respondents have plans to recruit more seniors into the association. This signifies clearly that they not only have observed the strong growth in the number of seniors, but also the growth of energetic seniors ready to get engaged.

An important message that appears in the survey is that the lack of universal design (limited accessibility) – including when it comes to premises – is a major reason why seniors are not fully enabled to perform voluntary efforts for their organization or for their community.

Among the important advices given in the survey are: "Explore and do mapping what the seniors themselves think they can help with. The organizations are sitting on an undiscovered "treasure» of resources!"

Not only the associations themselves, but also private and public sectors are discovering this "hidden resource". The number of research projects on the field is rising. State and municipalities make plans for increasing involvement. In this context, it is important to commemorate the *double-profit* for society to reap if it is facilitated for increased senior involvement in both volunteering and in NGOs:

Firstly, society will reap the efforts of the seniors.

In addition, seniors, individually and as a group, will benefit from their own involvement by staying mentally and physically healthy.

The community should activate the seniors, but on their own terms. That should also be the case for other age groups.

There is a Norwegian saying: "Without voluntary work, Norway stops!"

In terms of the demographic development that we are about to enter, with increasing number of seniors who will both be active and engaged, we may as well turn the sentence and say: "Without seniors, volunteering stops!"

Attachment to the report

A. Letter attaching the questionnaire

"Preparation for Active Ageing" – ProAge – is an EU Erasmus + project coordinated by the Hungarian municipality of Alsomocsolad. The partners in the project come from Hungary (2), Slovenia (1) and Norway (³⁰1). The overall goal of ProAge is to look at various activities and solutions that can ensure an active and qualitative old age for seniors 62 +.

As part of the Norwegian contribution, we want to map senior participation in NGOs in Norway. On behalf of this project, we hope that member organizations in volunteering Norway will respond to a short survey. If you have any questions about the project or survey, please contact: sturlabjerkaker@gmail.com

Findings from this survey will also be presented in resource groups for living the whole life reform, senior council, Oslo municipality's volunteer for participation – senior's efforts in volunteering.

In this study on senior involvement in NGOs, we define seniors as 62 years and older.

Frivillighet Norge Preparation for Active Ageing – ProAge

Yours sincerely

Bjørn Lindstad

Political senior adviser in Frivillighet Norge

Mobile: 90 97 99 55-Office: 21 56 76 55

E-mail: bjorn@frivillighetnorge.no

³⁰Norsk partner is Bjerkaker LearningLab (BLL), a small NGO company operated by Sturla Bjerkaker with partners.

B. Questionnaire

The following questionnaire was sent out to volunteering Norway's member organisations:

Part 1 is all about members and Part 2 is about voluntary efforts.

- 1. Are seniors an important target audience for your organization? Yes/No*
- 2. How much of your organization's members do you estimate is over 62 years?*
- 3. Does your organization have special offers and activities to members over 62 years of age?*
- 4. If so, which of these would you say that works well?*
- 5. Does your organization plan special measures to engage more members over 62 years in the organisation's activities? Yes/No*
- 6. If so, can you give examples of such measures?*
- 7. Does the organization have a plan to recruit more seniors as volunteers forward?*
- 8. If so, what actions are you going to implement or continue with?*
- 9. If no, what is the reason why you are not planning to recruit more seniors as volunteers?*
- 10. Is there anything in your organization that prevents seniors from performing voluntary efforts?*
- 11. If so, what could this be?*

12. *How can seniors be a volunteer resource in your organization? Possible to select multiple.*

A. Contribute to member meetings

B. Courses and training

C. Creating social events

D. positions of trust – e.g. On the board

E. mentor arrangements

F. Assisting with administrative tasks

G. Perform other practical volunteer tasks

H. Other, describe

14. *If you were to give advice to other NGOs to recruit and engage members and volunteers among seniors, what would your best advice be?*

Attachment 2

Dialogue Groups as a tool for increasing seniors' engagement and involvement - How to run Dialogue Groups and Study Circles

A GUDIE FOR GROUP LEADERS

This guide for group leaders of Dialogue Groups and Study Circles is an important contribution to the project Promoting Active Ageing – ProAge. One of the objectives of ProAge is to design activities for older people and to motivate them to participate. The guide is designed for leaders of dialogue groups where the main purpose is to involve older people in analysing and defining relevant activities in their own local community. This version of the guide will be further tested in the project. A revised and final version will be produced based on experiences from the test groups. We have chosen to produce a guide that is general and that can be adapted to more specific and limited topics of discussion.



One of the authors of this report, Tor Inge Martinsen. Photo by Sturla Bjerkaker

You are the group leader

As the leader of the dialogue group it is your main responsibility to plan, organise and summarise the group meetings. This is obviously a demanding task. At the same time, it is

important to underline the fact that the participants themselves are the actors creating and defining the activities in the group based on their own involvement, experiences, views, questions and opinions.

Along the way you can benefit from:

- Your own experiences:
You have most probably previously been involved in voluntary work, chaired meetings, taken part in discussions and activities in local organisations. These elements are of course valuable for you as a facilitator of the discussion group.
- Your knowledge – formal and informal:
Special or professional knowledge on the topics your group picks for discussions is not required. But our presumption is that you – the leader of the group – are motivated and ready to update yourself on the topic(s) that the dialogue group focuses on.
- Your personal qualities:
There are no general standards for a leader of these kind of group discussions. Our definite advice is that you form the role as group leader based on your own characteristics. The task is to listen actively, ask relevant questions, help to stimulate the discussions, have a democratic approach by activating all the group members. In short: that you create an inclusive and open platform for safe and constructive discussions within the group.
- Your attitudes:
We presuppose that you consider every participant as equally valuable and that you recognise each group members experience and opinions as important for the output of the group. It is your responsibility to secure an atmosphere that opens for the variety and collective knowledge that the participants represent.

Preparations

There is indeed a lot of truth in the old saying «*preparation makes half the job*».

Below you will find some advice on how to prepare before the first meeting in your discussion group:

- Aims and purposes:
Your task is linked up to a local voluntary organization which has chosen to use the method of dialogue groups as part of their involvement in a local task or challenge.

Through contact with the local branch of the organisation you must define the actual aim or purpose of the project and how the activities and discussion of the group is expected to be reported to the principal.

- Preparations related to the topic:

No one expects you as a group leader to be a professional expert, but we still recommend you do some research on the topic(s) that the group will discuss. The local organisation may, and most probably will have documentation on the subject(s) you will be discussing in the group (reports, pamphlets, information their website etc.).

You may also find information through the usual channels: media, internet, nonfiction books, persons in your surroundings with relevant knowledge etc.).

- The participants:

A dialogue group will usually consist of 5-10 individuals. This constitutes a variety of knowledge and meanings around the topic(s) on the agenda. The size of the group is manageable from a leader's point of view and should ensure that all voices can be heard along the way.

Most of the participants are probably recruited through the local branch of the organisation.

Before the first meeting in the group we recommend that you produce a list of names and addresses of the participants (see «First meeting»).

Some days before the first meeting of the group, the group members should receive from you (via e-mail, phone or letter) some basic information on the discussion group: aims and purposes, first meeting (place, time, duration) and other necessary information on practical matters. It could be a good idea if you are able to create a Facebook-group among the participants and yourself.

First meeting

The first meeting of the group is of course of vital importance. Here you have an opportunity to form a foundation for a safe, open, democratic and inclusive atmosphere of discussion in the group.

These might be contributions to a successful start:

- Present yourself (shortly) – perhaps including a suiting story that can be linked to the purpose of the groups work

- Clarify (again – shortly) aims and purposes of the groups work.
- Let each of the group members say a few words about themselves: name, age, where they live, personal interests and relations to the organization and the topic(s) of discussion, other information or interest.
- You can of course during this sequence ask questions or comment.
- During the first meeting: produce a list of names/addresses/contact info.
- Duration of each meeting to be decided after discussion (max 120 minutes recommended)
- Coffee, tea, water, biscuits, selection of fruits etc. is always appreciated.

Group at work - The discussions

Dialogue groups is a democratic method based on involvement where the overall goal is to get across the participants' views on certain topics that are on the agenda proposed by the local organisation.

One of the group leader's tasks is to report a summary of the group's discussions to the principal organisation.

The main challenge for you as group leader is to facilitate the group discussions.

There are of course a variety of methods to be used.

A standard version is for you to prepare a short factual introduction to the topic for the meeting and then open for questions, comments and discussion involving the group members.

Or you may concretise questions or limited issues linked to the topic of the meeting.

The group leader ought to always prepare some issues or questions in advance that the group should work through to fulfil its task.

It is important to be flexible, responsive and able to use views and inputs from the group members.

There is no blueprint for the result of the processes in the group. You and the group members have a shared responsibility to create the intellectual output.

Topics and talks

We strongly recommend that you before the first meeting and on the way formulate some central issues and problems and forward these to the group.

The content of these issues depends on the purpose of the group's work.

These might be relevant main issues: «To raise uncovered needs for elderly people in our district», «How can our organisation facilitate a strengthened involvement from the elderly in our local community? ».

Opinions and courage

As we previously have underlined: a dialogue group is based on a method of involvement from all the group members.

As supervisor you shall ensure that this aim is fulfilled.

These measures may help you on the way:

- Break-up of the group: let (e.g.) two-on-two (or three-on-three) discuss the issue on the agenda before you make a plenary sum-up of the small-group discussions
- Ask direct questions to a member that tends to be passive (e.g.): «Victoria, what is your opinion on this issue? »
- Let a question/issue circulate in the group to hear all group members
- A couple of days before the next meeting: send the participants (by e-mail, SMS) the issues/questions to be discussed on the next meeting.

Summary – your report

The group's work should be summarised in two sequences: after each meeting in the group (short summary) and after the last group meeting (final report).

At the end of each meeting the group leader should sum up and check out with the participants the main content of and conclusions from the discussions. This will at the same time provide you with a draft of the short report from the actual session.

We do not recommend that you make written notes during the group's work and discussions. This will complicate your role as supervisor and distract you from ensuring involvement from all participants.

The dialogue group you are conducting is a project initiated by a local organisation to focus on a defined issue. The summary of the groups work will be an input to the

organisations efforts to design new services for elderly people, as a step in a decision-making process or another purpose which is of importance for the organisation and its target group(s).

It is your duty as group leader to prepare a summary from the discussion and present it to the principal organisation. There are two main channels for reporting: either a short-written summary of the main points from the group discussion or an oral report presented by you. Our recommendation is obviously a combination of these two methods.

A guide for group leaders. Version per 03.12.2019

Attachment 3

Senior Programs – Survey and Wishlist

A working model for dialogue groups (Model: Velferden Hamar)

Which programmes does your institution offer today?

Describe each of the programmes regarding:

- Content
- Participants (number, female/male)
- How the activity is organised (time of day, with/without teacher/leader, frequency, participant fees (?), other relevant info.)
- Other comments (e.g. suggested changes/improvements)

Activity 1:

Content

Participants (number, female/male)

How the activity is organised (time of day, with/without teacher/leader, frequency, participant fees (?), other relevant info.)

Other comments (e.g. suggested changes/improvements)

Activity 2

Content

Participants (number, female/male)

How the activity is organised (time of day, with/without teacher/leader, frequency, participant fees (?), other relevant info.)

Other comments (e.g. suggested changes/improvements)

Activity 3

Content

Participants (number, female/male)

How the activity is organised (time of day, with/without teacher/leader, frequency, participant fees (?), other relevant info.)

Other comments (e.g. suggested changes/improvements)

A wish-list

The main purpose of the dialogue group is to analyse the users – the seniors – own needs and wishes regarding offers and programmes at your institution.

Through discussions in the dialogue group you shall propose new activities based on seniors' own needs and wishes. Please note that you shall not discuss this with the perspective of seniors who already are active at the centre. New activities can also recruit new seniors.

Describe each of your suggestions:

- Content
- Grounds
- Suggested organisation (daytime/evenings, frequency, economy, is teacher/leader provided, strategies for recruitment of seniors etc.)
- Other comments

New activity 1:

Content

Grounds

Suggested organisation (daytime/evenings, frequency, economy, is teacher/leader provided, strategies for recruitment of seniors etc.)

Other comments

New activity 2:

Content

Grounds

Suggested organisation (daytime/evenings, frequency, economy, is teacher/leader provided, strategies for recruitment of seniors etc.)

Other comments

