

## Introduction

**"The Third Shift. Andragogical Reflections on the @ktywny Senior Project"** is a monograph devoted to the numerous aspects of senior education, all the more valuable, since it is based on experience. Not only does it constitute an example of good practice, but it is also characterised by a scientific approach to the presented information. Representatives of diverse circles and social groups – among others, employees and doctoral studies students of the academies of Wrocław (University of Wrocław, University School of Physical Education in Wrocław, Wrocław Medical University), employees of Lower Silesian non-governmental organisations, and, last but not least, the seniors who took part in the project – have contributed to the writing of the present book. The seniors themselves are the authors of the title "The Third Shift" which is to symbolise people of advanced age, the third generation, as well as the start of seniors' active participation in social life.

The book has been divided into four parts – I. On the activation of seniors, II. Computer skills training for seniors, III. Health education of seniors, IV. The project activity for seniors – depending on the subject of the articles to be found therein.

An article by Dr Walentyna Wnuk devoted to the numerous aspects of the notion of the activity of seniors begins the first part. The author – a holder of a doctoral degree in humanities, the creator and an employee of many years of the University of the Third Age at the University of Wrocław, whose experience cannot be overestimated – directs her attention and reflection to the opportunities and the limitations of the activity of seniors in Lower Silesia, with her conclusions founded on the conducted research. Mgr Joanna Ryłko elaborates further on the subject in her article on group communication among seniors. J. Ryłko as a participant of the @ktywny Senior project conducted the workshops and the research that constituted the basis of her Master's thesis. She has also decided to present the results of the research as an example of a combination of good practice and scientific approach. The description of the "Learning from life and one's own biography" workshops is characterised by the features of good practice; it is presented by a student of doctoral studies in the Institute of Pedagogics at the University of Wrocław – Magdalena Wnuk-Olenicz. Thanks to the detailed description of the classes conducted complemented with teaching materials used during the workshops we are allowed to enter the world of seniors and their memories. The article by Grzegorz Mendyka – a leading expert in genealogy – takes one on an even further

journey; during the project the author took seniors back to their family past, at the same time teaching them how to construct intergenerational relationships on the basis of the search for family roots. The first part is concluded with a text about the foreign language education of seniors written by on the basis of the experience gained during the English language course conducted by inż Marek Gulanowski. The author describes the specific character of the process of the learning of seniors, the methodology employed, and the forms and contents of teaching. At the same time, the areas that require a teacher running the classes for seniors to display not only his linguistic, but also communicative competences are discussed.

The second part, devoted to the computer skills training course for seniors, includes three long articles. In the first of them Dr Ewa Jurczyk-Romanowska – a lecturer in the Institute of Pedagogics, a chairman of Stowarzyszenie AVEC (AVEC association) that was one of the organisers of the *@ktywny Senior* project, and the editor of this book – presents an analysis of the motivational process of seniors resulting in their participation in computer skills training courses. Having conducted research before and during the course she described not only the motivations of people of advanced age, but their expectations and demands, as well. Further, Mgr Joanna Golonka – a doctoral studies student in the Institute of Pedagogics – describes the conditions of organisation of the beginner level computer skills training courses aimed at seniors. The author prepared the substantive aspect of the first part of the training course organised as part of the *@ktywny Senior* project, which makes the presented experiences all the more valuable. The continuation – the advanced level computer skills training course and introduction to the world of the internet – was taken care of by Mgr Jacek Gulanowski, also a student of doctoral studies in the Institute of Pedagogics. In his publication he puts emphasis on the advantages and the risks of the virtual dimension, providing also a valuable description of the new reality opening up to the seniors. Both of the articles are complemented with the training course curriculum and the exemplary teaching materials developed by the course instructors, who are the authors of the second part of the book, as well.

The third part, in turn, is devoted to health education of seniors. It constitutes a smooth transition to the medical paradigm presented by doctors – Jacek Stankowski – with his accessible description, bordering on popular science, of the ailments of the old age – and Anna Źyszczyńska, who elaborates on the medical examinations carried out before and throughout the *@ktywny Senior* project. Moving on to the further texts we observe a certain substitution of the medical approach by a humanities one, with the article on the subject of physical activity in therapy and prevention of old age illnesses situated in between and prepared by a team representing the University School of Physical Education (AWF) in Wrocław – Dr Iwona Krysiak-Zielonka and Mgr Justyna Mazurek. Further representatives of AWF – Dr Marta Koszczyc and Mgr Łukasz Koper – creators of the University of the Third Age at their alma mater – discuss the seniors' attitude towards health

and its connection with their lifestyles. In their article they describe a philosophy of health and the holistic approach to health education of seniors. The third part is concluded by the article of Dr Małgorzata Synowiec-Piłat who discusses the activity of seniors in the context of health promotion, with a description of the Polish reality and examples of the practices of other countries constituting the basis of her analysis.

The last part introduces quite a different atmosphere, dealing with analysis of the opportunities of organising further projects that seniors could benefit from and the advantages and disadvantages of the organisation of the *@ktywny Senior* project. A review and structure of European Union sources of funds for projects aimed at seniors are described by Dr Ewa Jurczyk-Romanowska – this time working in her primary field of scientific interest, law – and Mgr Natalia Romanowska, an experienced practitioner in acquiring grant-aid as part of Operational Programme Innovative Economy and Operational Programme Human Capital. In the further part, Mgr Anna Dobrzycka – with her detailed scrutiny of the finances and the budget of the *@ktywny Senior* project – and Mgr Anna Bressa – discussing risk management in the context of the project in question – present the results of their research and the conclusions drawn from their analyses. Discussing both of these subject appears to be of crucial importance from the perspective of the so-called good practice, because their organisation seemed to be the weakest point of the entire initiative. Not only do both of the authors criticise the mistakes made, but – what is essential – they propose a number of solutions to be introduced to improve the future actions aimed at seniors, as well. The fourth part and the book is concluded with a report of the *@ktywny Senior* project supervisor – Marian Ferenc – consisting in a recapitulation of the actions undertaken as part of the project.

While preparing the present book an effort was made to put equal emphasis on the scientific character of the research and the reports and on the presentation of the practical aspects of the implemented initiative. That is why each part is complemented with a selection of lesson plans that can be used again in the education of people of advanced age and that may constitute a source of inspiration for further educational initiatives aimed at seniors.

In order to provide the description of the *@ktywny Senior* project with a more realistic, substantial and easily identifiable character photos and information about the authors and organisers of the initiative who are also the authors of the articles are included in the book. The photos constitute a graphical conclusion of the first three parts to serve as proof that the organising of such projects is not only a realisable initiative, but also a source of great satisfaction.

*Ewa Jurczyk-Romanowska*