



LITHUANIA

engaging seniors and youth in community development

These days the world is undergoing marked changes in its demography. Long-lasting ageing of the population is considerably changing societies all around the globe. Demographic ageing leads to a lot of multifaceted consequences for a sustainable and healthy development of societies. The continuously growing numbers of older people both in Lithuania and in Europe require diverse social, economic and cultural changes which are vital in order to secure further gradual development of the country.

According to Statistics Lithuania, at the beginning of this century even more than 20 percent of the population of Lithuania was 60 years old and older. If current demographic tendencies remain, it is predicted that by 2030 the share of senior citizens will have reached over 27 percent. These facts point to the inevitable conclusion that the increasing number of the aging population will have a huge impact on the development of Lithuania, meaning that, with the ageing of society, more attention shall be paid to the quality of life of older people since it is this group of people that will undoubtedly influence the general standard of living in the country. Moreover, ever growing rates of immigrants and dramatically reducing numbers of newborns also imply that the population of young people in Lithuania is shrinking, which results in more onerous burdens for middle-aged people.

The mindset that is dominant in Lithuania also affects senior citizens' situation in the country. The Soviet clichés imposed on every age group still have relics in the present days. For example, playing board games and drinking refreshing soft drinks had been only associated with children, only adults were allowed to eat in restaurants, whereas seniors were supposed to stay at home, work in a garden and help grandchildren. This mindset still limits senior citizen's lifestyle. For instance, unlike in the West, rarely do retired citizens travel abroad since many regard themselves as being too old and unhealthy for this. What is more, senior Lithuanians spent their youths without many things that were already commonly available in the West (e.g. personal cars, dining out, bank cards etc.), which may explain why they lack will and ability to use them today. Moreover, the former Soviet policies made retired Lithuanians desperately poor. There were no pension funds in Lithuania so the current workforce, which is

rapidly decreasing due to emigration, is forced to pay the pensions to the entire retiree population (which makes up more than 20% of the whole population). As a result, old age pensions are fairly small but even this puts a tremendous strain on the country's economy, making the state borrow money at high costs.

Therefore, one of the crucial challenges that Lithuania needs to rise to is the implementation of fundamental structural reforms at social, educational, cultural and economic levels so that the gap between the old and the young is bridged, leading to a greatly reduced social exclusion of senior citizens. As a result, this paper seeks to discuss the trends in population ageing in Lithuania, aiming to provide ideas on the involvement of seniors and youth in community development and creating a basis for developing a programme on social inclusion.

methods

During the period 1971–2019, it was seen that the age structure of the Indonesian population continued to experience changes and began to shift towards old age. Those who previously were a bonus from demographics and were born in the baby boom era began to shift into productive residents who would later become elderly residents.

To start with, in terms of definitions, it shall be noted that there is no universal perception on what constitutes being young or old (senior) as it depends on the geographical location. For example, based on a 2011 Eurobarometer survey, a senior citizen in Slovakia is anyone aged 57, while in the Netherlands anyone over 70 (Davies 2014). A senior label is quite often given to people who have reached a retirement age. As the Finish Centre for Pensions suggests (FCFP), in most EU Member States the general retirement age is 65 years. Lithuania is not an exception here – the current plan is that the retirement age for men will rise by 2 months a year and for women by 4 months a year until the retirement age for both men and women is 65 years in 2025. Therefore, on the whole, in this analysis, a senior citizen is seen as a person aged 65 and over, unless specified otherwise. A definition of a young person is also rather vague but in this analysis it will be largely based on the Youth in Action programme (YIA), which suggests that a young person is any person under 30 years old.

Table 1. Gender and age distribution among the respondents.

Age group	Number of females	Number of males	Total number of people per age group
Young people (aged 18–29)	24	6	30
Middle-aged people (aged 30–64)	52	4	56
Senior citizens (aged 65 and over)	66	6	72
IN TOTAL:	142	16	158

The method of the current analysis is based on a qualitative-quantitative approach. In order to find out the most acute social problems related to seniors' exclusion, a questionnaire was designed (see Appendix 1) and distributed among Lithuanian citizens. In total, 158 respondents answered this survey, 30 of whom (19%) were young people (under 30 years old) and 72 (46%) senior citizens. The gender and age distribution among the respondents (see Table 1) shows that there are more women than men among senior citizens: 66 respondents were elderly women, which constitutes even 92% of the total senior responses, and 6 respondents were males, constituting 8% of the senior respondents. Interestingly enough, the share of males is completely outnumbered by females among all the other age groups too, which implies that the women's share in Lithuania's population is much greater than the men's. This is also true when talking about middle-aged people. In fact, according to the World Bank (ILOSTAT), Lithuania is the only country in Europe to regularly have more women than men in its workforce – currently, the percentage is 50% and it is larger than that for any other European or Western country.

Regarding the educational background of the respondents, it shall be noted that on the whole the Lithuanian population appears to have high levels of educational attainment. The youngest members of society (aged 18-29) can be split into two almost equal groups and demonstrate an interesting tendency – almost half of the young people (47%) received the lowest degree and the other half of them (40%) gained the highest degree. This might be the case because this age group included very young people, for example, those aged 18, which means that some of the respondents might have still been studying at universities or colleges and gaining their highest degrees at the time they filled in the questionnaire.

Table 2. Educational background of the respondents.

Education	Young people (aged 18-29)		Middle-aged people (aged 30-64)		Senior citizens (aged 65 and over)	
	Number of respondents	Share of % per age group	Number of respondents	Share of % per age group	Number of respondents	Share of % per age group
Secondary	14	47%	2	4%	3	4%
Vocational	1	3%	4	7%	5	7%
Basic	2	7%	0	0%	0	0%
Advanced vocational	1	3%	20	36%	17	24%
Higher education	12	40%	30	54%	47	65%

Talking about the other age groups, it is worth notifying that middle-aged people and senior citizens share almost identical educational backgrounds: a very small amount of people gained lower levels of education (secondary and vocational), whereas the bulk of the respondents in those age groups received the highest levels of education (advanced vocational and higher education). Interestingly enough, senior citizens seem to be the most educated part of society in Lithuania – even 65% of them have a higher education degree. None of the other age groups have such a high share of percentage in this respect. For more figures, please refer to Table 2.

The labour market in Lithuania is widely diverse and ranges from lower positions to high-powered jobs (see Table 3). No wonder the absolute majority of young people aged 18-29 (67%) are students, which confirms the aforementioned statement that some of the young respondents might have still been studying at universities or colleges at the time they filled in the questionnaire, which is why they do not work. 10% of the young respondents have lower positions in the job market (they work as social/youth workers), but, surprisingly enough, even 20% of the youth respondents claim to have high-powered jobs (e.g. they identified themselves as leads or businessmen).

Table 3. Occupation of the respondents

Education	Young people (aged 18-29)		Middle-aged people (aged 30-64)		Senior citizens (aged 65 and over)	
	Number of respondents	Share of % per age group	Number of respondents	Share of % per age group	Number of respondents	Share of % per age group
Unemployed	1	3%	5	10%	0	0%
Student	20	67%	1	2%	0	0%
Lower positions	3	10%	17	33%	0	0%
Civil servant	0	0%	1	2%	0	0%
Specialist	0	0%	4	8%	2	3%
High-powered job	6	20%	12	23%	3	4%
Individual activity	0	0%	1	2%	0	0%
Pensioner	0	0%	11	21%	66	93%

Within the middle-aged group (aged 30–64), the majority of people in Lithuania have lower positions (e.g. librarians, workers, social/youth workers, workers in private clinics). A similar share of middle-aged people (around 20%) have high-powered jobs (e.g. leads or businessmen) or are pensioners, the latter of which does not come as a surprise since at the time when the questionnaire was distributed, i.e. in 2020, the pension age for men was 64, while women's pension age was 63. 8% of the middle-aged people fall into the category of specialists (most of them defined themselves as accountants). It shall also be noted that 3 people from this age group refused to answer the question about their occupation and 1 person could not specify any job because his or her disability prevents him or her from having one.

Among senior citizens, no surprise, the dominant occupation is being a pensioner (93%), which, in the main, coincides with the unemployed status. Only an extremely small part of senior citizens in Lithuania (7% to be precise) is actually involved in some work activities: 3% are specialists (mainly in the medical industry) and 4% work as leads or heads. The medical aspect here shall not be ignored – it may actually imply that with age people start paying more attention to health as health problems become rather pressing at an older age. Finally, 1 older person refused to answer this question.

Importantly enough, it shall be highlighted that even though senior citizens are the most educated people in Lithuania, their share of percentage in high-powered jobs is the smallest among all the age groups. This might not only be because of health problems preventing them from doing an important job with many weighty responsibilities. This might also be related to the history of Lithuania – all senior citizens in Lithuania got their education when the country belonged to the Soviet Union so no surprise older people have outdated skills and desperately need to update them so that they have more work opportunities in the job market. As a result, the implementation of modern social, educational, cultural and economic programmes for seniors is of profound significance.



seniors' situation

IN LITHUANIA

These days, Lithuania is facing three key issues which are common all around Europe, namely 1) increasing longevity (life expectancy), 2) low birth rates and 3) the greying of the baby boom generation. All these issues lead to an inescapable conclusion that older people make up a growingly large proportion of the population in Lithuania.

Table 4. Life Expectancy in Lithuania.

Year	2000	2005	2010	2015	2018	2019	2020
Life expectancy	70.82	71.73	72.71	74.65	75.65	75.80	75.95

Source:

United Nations (Department of Economic and Social Affairs): 2019 Revision of World Population Prospects. Lithuania Life Expectancy 1950–2020 <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/LTU/lithuania/life-expectancy> (accessed on 17 April 2020).

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, life span in Lithuania has been steadily rising (see Table 4). This statement also finds support in one recent research by Eurostat (PSA), where it is claimed that increase in the share of the population aged 65 years or over between 2008 and 2018 in Lithuania is 2.8%, which is the average in the whole European Union. Birth rates, on the other hand, remain dismally low – after a slight rise in 2005–2009, the birth rate has a strong tendency to go down (see Table 5), resulting in a negative value regarding the natural population change (see Table 6). The abovementioned statements and the tables below show that increasing longevity and low birth rates speak of the fact that older people make up a significant share of the total population in Lithuania.

Table 5. Number of newborns in Lithuania.

Year	2000	2005	2010	2015	2018
Number of newborns	34,149	30,541	30,676	31,475	28,149

Source:

Statistics Lithuania (Lietuvos statistikos departamentas): Population and social statistics, population, fertility, natural population change (Naturali gyventojų kaita) https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/population-demographic-situation-languages-and-religions-44_en#_ednref2 (accessed on 17 April 2020).

Table 6. Natural population change (increase/decrease) in Lithuania.

Year	2000	2005	2010	2015	2018
Population change	-4,770	-13,258	-9,867	-10,301	-11,425

Source:

Statistics Lithuania (*Lietuvos statistikos departamentas*): Population and social statistics, population, fertility, natural population change (*Natūrali gyventojų kaita*) https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/population-demographic-situation-languages-and-religions-44_en#_ednref2 (accessed on 17 April 2020).

In addition to that, recent studies on the total number of people in Lithuania signify the greying of the baby boom generation (the generation that is most often defined as individuals born between 1946 and 1964, during the post-war baby boom) – the number of older people has been steadily increasing in the country for almost 20 years (see Table 7).

Table 7. Percentage of population by age at the beginning of the year.

Year	Total population (number of people)	Under 14	15–64	65 and more
2019	2,794,184	15.1	65.1	19.8
2015	2,921,262	14.6	66.7	18.7
2010	3,141,976	15.0	67.7	17.3
2005	3,355,220	17.1	67.1	15.8
2002	3,454,637	19.0	66.5	14.5

Source:

Statistics Lithuania (*Lietuvos statistikos departamentas*): Population and social statistics, population and its composition, resident population at the beginning of the year (*Nuolatinių gyventojų skaičius metų pradžioje*) https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/population-demographic-situation-languages-and-religions-44_en (accessed on 16 April 2020).

The table above also shows that the total population of Lithuania is rapidly shrinking, from 3.5 million people in 2002 to only 2.8 million in 2019, which means that Lithuania has lost more than half a million people within the last twenty years. One of the main reasons for such a precipitous decline in the population is emigration – emigration rates from Lithuania are still dramatically high (see Table 8). Interestingly enough, even though emigrant rates do not soar any more, the percentage of young people leaving Lithuania is still going up, and it is way bigger than the percentage of senior citizens who leave Lithuania. This suggests that emigration rates also contribute to the fact that the population of younger people in Lithuania is getting smaller and smaller, whereas the population of older people is increasing.

Table 8. Percentage of emigrants from Lithuania by age.

Year	Total number of emigrants	Under 30	65 and more
2019	29,273	55.5	1.3
2016	50,333	54.4	1

Source:

Statistics Lithuania (*Lietuvos statistikos departamento*): *Emigrants and immigrants by age group and sex* (*Emigrantai ir imigrantai pagal amžiaus grupes ir lyti*) <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/EN/statistiniu-rodikliu-analize?hash=c7fd5ee9-3c03-4f2d-96b6-b0e5c0c9b3b4#/> (accessed on 16 April 2020).

Regarding the composition of the population of senior citizens in Lithuania, there are more women than men: males constitute 34% of the senior citizens, while women 66%, which, according to Eurostat (AE), is the case all around Europe. Besides, this statement can also been confirmed by the aforementioned gender and age division of the respondents to the questionnaire, used as the main tool of this research (see Table 1). The division between males and females seems to be quite stable – it has not changed much during the last decade. However, it shall be noted that the share of old men has slightly increased in the last couple of years (see Table 9).

Table 9. Older population by sex in Lithuania.

Year	Total number of people aged 65 and over	Males (%)	Females (%)
2019	552,373	33.7	66.3
2017	550,197	33.6	66.4
2015	547,115	33.6	66.4
2009	547,749	34.1	65.9

Source:

Statistics Lithuania (*Lietuvos statistikos departamento*): *Resident population by sex and age group at the beginning of the year* (*Nuolatiniai gyventojai pagal lyti ir amžiaus grupes metų pradžioje*) <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/statistiniu-rodikliu-analize?hash=ab672ada-e22f-409e-9ce0-33915afade8f#/> (accessed on 17 April 2020).

If we compare the numbers of people aged 65 and over (in Table 9) with the numbers of newborns (in Table 5), we come to the conclusion that the ageing of the Lithuanian population is proportional, i.e. when the proportion of children is shrinking, the proportion of older people is growing correspondingly. Interestingly enough, Miklionienė (2011) has noticed a similar tendency in her study. She proposed that proportions of all age groups in the total number of the Lithuanian population have undergone

significant changes that actually went to different directions. The proportion of the youngest population has decreased almost twice (from 27 percent in 1959 to 15 percent in 2010), whereas the proportion of those over 65 has doubled (from 8 percent in 1959 to 17 percent in 2010).

There are three key factors indicating whether society is aging or not: 1) median age, 2) aging index, and 3) dependency ratio or age-dependency ratio. Starting with the first one, the median age is the age that divides a population into two numerically equally sized groups, i.e. half the people are younger than this age and half are older. It is a single index that summarizes the age distribution of a specific population. Countries with lower median age tend to have higher population growth rates, whereas an increasing median age shows that a population is ageing fast. In Lithuania, at the beginning of 2019, the median age of the population was 44 years (for men – 40 years, for women – 47), i.e. by 5 years longer than at the beginning of 2009 (for men – by 4 years, for women – by 5). Interestingly enough, at the beginning of 2019, the median age of men was by 7 years shorter than that of women (at the beginning of 2009, by 6 years), which supports the abovementioned fact that there are more older women than men in the country. Last but not least, it shall be noted that the median age in Lithuania is very high – according to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Lithuania's median age in 2018 took even the 15th position among 228 countries around the globe. Study Chart 1 to see how the median age in Lithuania keeps growing gradually.

Chart 1. Median age of the population in Lithuania, 2009–2019



Source:

Statistics Lithuania (Lietuvos statistikos departamentas): Median age of the population at the beginning of the year (Medianinis gyventojų amžius metų pradžioje) <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/statistiniu-rodikliu-analize?hash=561ff255-6f20-4522-8aab-c0bda815d107#/> (accessed on 17 April 2020).

One more significant factor used to indicate whether society is aging or not is the index of aging. It refers to the number of elderly persons of an age when they are generally economically inactive (aged 65 and older) per 100 persons younger than 15 years old in a specific population. This index increases as population ages, i.e. the higher the index, the more elderly people there are

in a specific population. In Lithuania, the index of aging tends to grow, even though its growth seems to slow down after 2015 (which might be because of finance-related events that year, e.g. Lithuania joined the Eurozone, Lithuania was classified as advanced economy by International Monetary Fund (LB) etc.). What is more, Lithuania's index of aging remains relatively high in comparison to other European countries – according to Eurostat (AI), in 2018 only Bulgaria, Croatia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Malta and Portugal had a higher aging index. See the increase of the index of aging in Lithuania in Chart 2 below.

Chart 2. Index of ageing in Lithuania, 2009–2019.



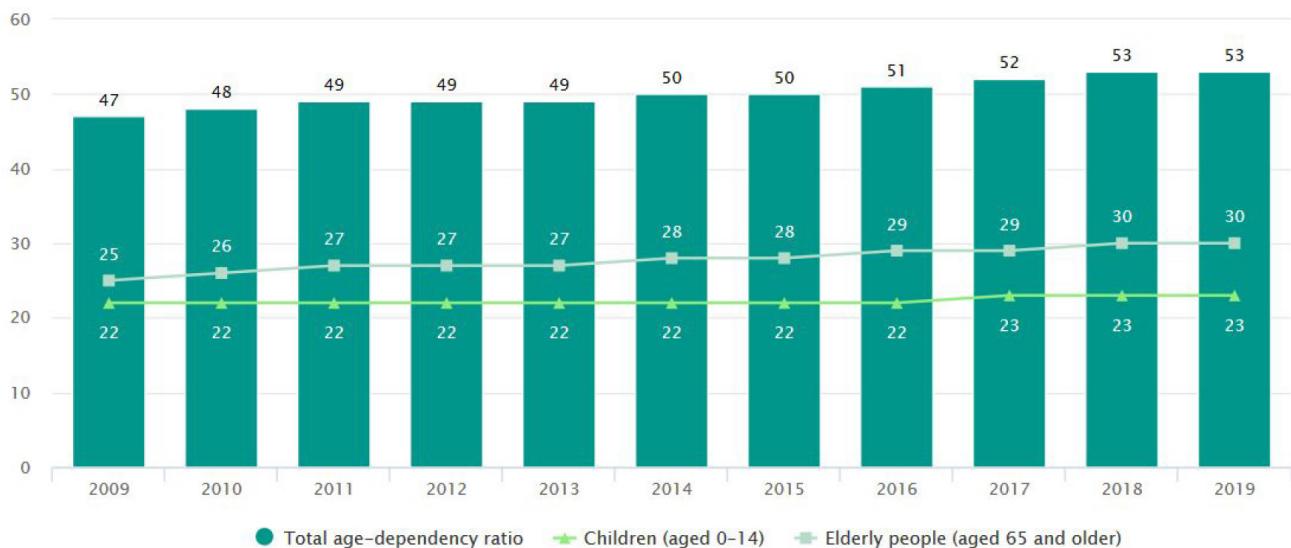
Source:

Statistics Lithuania (*Lietuvos statistikos departamento*): Index of ageing at the beginning of the year (*Demografinės senatvės koeficientas metų pradžioje*) <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/statistiniu-rodikliu-analize?hash=fbee7084-03a9-42c8-9d88-88b8c742cf3c#/> (accessed on 17 April 2020).

Last but not least, the dependency ratio focuses on separating those of working age (between the ages of 15 and 64 years of age) from those of non-working age. It is a measure of the number of dependents aged zero to 14 and over the age of 65 in comparison to the total population aged 15 to 64. In Lithuania the dependency ratio is rather high – within the last decade the dependency ratio has been gradually increasing and seems to set stable only in the very last years. A low dependency ratio means that there are sufficient people working who can support the dependent population, which means that a lower ratio could allow for better pensions and better healthcare for citizens. A higher ratio, like in Lithuania, indicates more financial stress on working people and possible political instability because those of working age, and the overall economy, face a greater burden in supporting the aging population. For more information see Chart 3.

To sum up, as in many other countries around the world, Lithuania's population is ageing. A significant decrease in the numbers of young people has been noticed over the last decade, while at the same time there has been a sharp rise in the number of seniors as a percentage of the total population.

Chart 3. Age-dependency ratios in Lithuania, 2009–2019.



Source:

Statistics Lithuania (*Lietuvos statistikos departamentas*): *Age-dependency ratios at the beginning of the year* (išlaikomo amžiaus žmonių koeficientai metų pradžioje) <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/statistiniu-rodikliu-analize?hash=2c361bfc-82ba-4c66-820e-94e7f3cfca29#/> (accessed on 17 April 2020).

This means that the proportion of people of working age is shrinking, while the relative number of those retired is expanding. In addition to that, the share of senior citizens in the total population is predicted to increase in the coming decades as a greater proportion of the post-war baby-boom generation reaches retirement. This situation will, in turn, lead to an increased burden on those of working age to provide for the social expenditure required by the ageing population for a variety of related services. These important demographic changes, together with the sensitive widespread problem of emigration, have a direct impact on the whole country and its economy, which is why they shall not be ignored. It is, therefore, perhaps no surprise that older people are the focus of a range of policies and programmes worldwide, including those concerned with discrimination, active ageing, social protection and accessibility of public services.



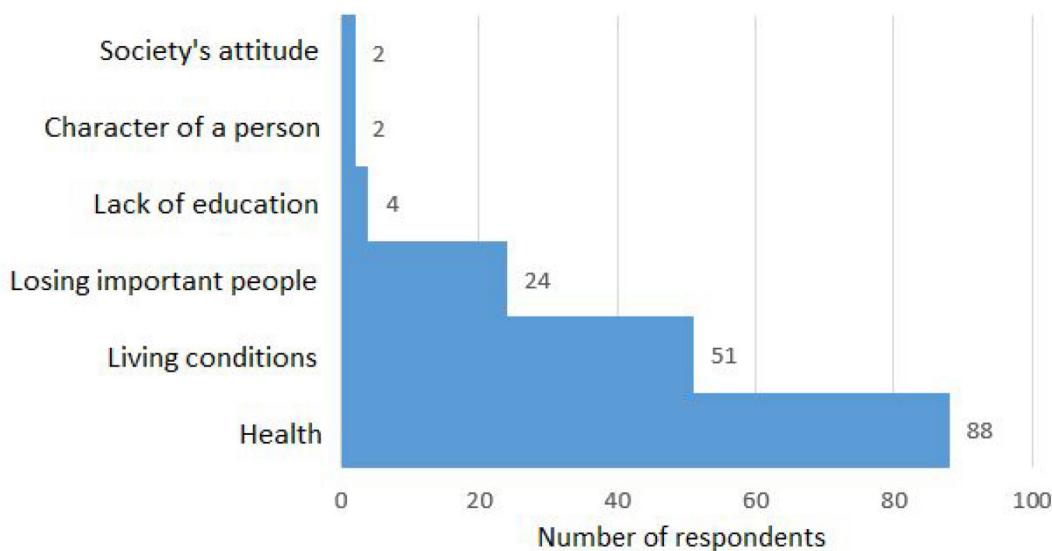
social problems

RELATED TO THE SENIORS' EXCLUSION

The main reasons why Lithuanian seniors face acute social problems are related to health, living conditions, losing important people, lack of education, the character of a person and society's attitude to the elderly. In the questionnaire, the absolute majority of the respondents highlighted that the most significant reasons are related to health. The senior respondents said that they encounter health issues and disabilities caused by old age (75% of the senior respondents) and feel the inevitable aging process (47%). What is more, quite a number of respondents pointed out that living conditions do have influence on the problems they run into. Even 38% of the elderly respondents claimed that their location (a city, a town, a village etc.) might be the cause why they feel isolated, and even 33% highlighted that they live alone, which is why they feel isolated from the rest of society.

In addition to that, some elderly people also mentioned that the strong feeling of social exclusion and loneliness is aroused by the fact they have lost some important people in their lives – 21% of the senior respondents claimed that their relatives have passed away and 13% revealed that losing their husband or wife strengthened the feelings of isolation and loneliness. This suggests that elderly people have witnessed more than one death in their life, and seeing that you gradually lose the people you love leads to a bad emotional and psychological state, which, in turn, might explain why some of them shut themselves away from society and are alone.

Chart 4. Reasons for seniors' exclusion.



Education-related reasons shall not be ignored, too. 6% of the elderly respondents claimed that they lack interest in self-education and, on the whole, in anything (presumably because they have tried everything that could be experienced). Still others highlighted that lack of education and a language barrier make them feel excluded. Last but not least, other reasons



causing social problems for senior citizens in Lithuania are related to the character of a person (i.e. introversion – some people tend to stay alone because they define themselves as introverts) and society's attitude to the elderly (for some people sex seems to be the factor leading to exclusion, while others feel a negative outlook from society).

All the above-mentioned reasons cause a variety of acute social problems related to the seniors' exclusion. When asked to specify the problems, the overwhelming majority of the senior respondents (even 69%) spoke of social problems. 29% of the elderly pointed out that they lack entertainment, namely cultural events, leisure time activities and recreational opportunities and 19% of the senior respondents highlighted that they lack opportunities for meaningful volunteering. No surprise even 68% of the older respondents are eager to participate in organising leisure time activities, such as concerts, social campaigns and exhibitions. 35% of the older respondents expressed willingness to contribute to art related activities, such as painting and handcraft, and 33% of the elderly showed interest in contributing to volunteering campaigns. Interestingly enough, 16% are interested in contributing to sport events.

It shall be stressed that senior citizens would like to contribute to all those social events but the main problem here is that they are not aware of such social possibilities – even 21% of the elderly respondents claimed that they lack such kind of information. This might also be connected to the location where the elderly people live – 21% claimed that they have difficulties to travel because of limited transport. This is particularly true for people who live in remote villages or small towns in Lithuania – sparse transport networks, irregular bus schedules, rarely visiting family members increase the feelings of social exclusion.

All this data clearly shows that seniors feel socially isolated because they lack social inclusion programmes and activities related to culture, leisure time and volunteering. Therefore, making sure that seniors are visited and not forgotten (and not only by their relatives or family members) in remote places and creating social inclusion programmes for those who live in cities and promoting them appropriately are the key in combating severe social problems that lead to seniors' exclusion nowadays.

Another huge part of the elderly respondents mentioned limited employment and education possibilities. 39% of the old

respondents pointed out that they suffer from age discrimination, i.e. they would like to work but employers refuse to give them a job because they treat an old applicant or employee less favourably because of his or her age. In addition to that, a number of senior citizens (36%) stressed education-related problems, too: lack of education possibilities, not knowing the local language well enough, and computer illiteracy. This suggests that the education that elderly people received in Lithuania is way outdated since it was provided by the Soviet Union and, apparently, lacked Western influences. This might also provide some reasons why seniors keep struggling when trying to be employed in Lithuania. In a nutshell, there are a lot of problems related to work and education that senior citizens in Lithuania face and these need to be eradicated as soon as possible because the numbers of the elderly increase every day.

Among other problems that lead to seniors' exclusion are health and personal problems. 22% of the old respondents stressed that they have limited possibilities to use health care institutions. No surprise there are always long queues in Lithuanian clinics and hospitals – astronomically expensive private health institutions and lack of specialists in state medical centres created limited possibilities for seniors to get the needed medical care and support. Importantly, it shall be stressed that one respondent revealed that it is depression that is the main problem that he or she faces. Therefore, more attention to seniors' medical care needs to be paid and seniors' wellbeing should be taken really seriously as bad physical and psychological (emotional) state leads to unhappiness, frustration and, eventually, feelings of isolation and exclusion.

Table 10. Most acute problems related to the seniors' exclusion.

Category of a problem	Specific problem	No. of respondents
Social problems	Age discrimination	28
	Lack of entertainment (leisure time and cultural events)	21
	Lack of information	15
Location problems	Opportunities for meaningful volunteering	14
	Limited transport	15
Education problems	Remote town/village	1
	Lack of education possibilities	9
	Not knowing the local language	1
Health problems	Computer illiteracy	1
	Limited possibilities to use health care institutions	16
	Depression	1
Personal problems	Life difficulties	1
	Lack of determination	1

Last but not least, some elderly respondents (3%) pointed out that they have certain life difficulties, yet they did not reveal what exact difficulties they had in mind. Most probably it might be related to the previously described loss of important people in seniors' life. Finally, some seniors (3%) also said that they lack determination (self-motivation), which might be related to the previously discussed aspect of personality.

good seniors' inclusion practices

One good seniors' inclusion practice in Lithuania was introduced in November 2013 when students from Utena University of Applied Sciences organised a project called "Students for Seniors and Seniors for Students" to exchange knowledge between young people and senior citizens. The university students provided senior citizens with free but high quality health care and cosmetology services, mainly because these services in Lithuania are way too expensive for old people. The students taught the elderly various techniques of massage and exercise to ensure that they stay fit even when they are old. The students also checked senior citizens' blood pressure, sugar and cholesterol levels in their blood and delivered a few workshops on how to take care of mouth hygiene. All this was done to show that taking good care of one's health is of high importance for everyone, the young and the old.

In addition to that, female students showed the elderly how to make old clothes look stylish and fashionable, i.e. how to change them so that they look like new clothes. What is more, the students also shared some tips on how to become friends with modern technologies so senior citizens who wanted to improve their computer literacy skills had a great chance to do that with the help of young people so deeply interested in modern technologies. In return, the elderly shared their personal stories with the students and told them a lot of useful advice from their own experience. Read the following website for more information on this practice: [FIND HERE](#) (accessed on 20 April 2020).

One more good seniors' inclusion practice was introduced at Klaipėda State University of Applied Sciences in February 2020. University students invited senior citizens to go back to the times when Klaipėda was the capital of Prussia. The students organized a theatrical performance and dressed like Frederick William II and his wife Louisa to show how their city was run by those two important figures in history. After the theatrical performance, the elderly had a chance to try virtual reality headsets, which was particularly important for those people who had physical disabilities (e.g. physical impairment, using a wheelchair etc.) and could not walk around the city on their own – in this way they were given an opportunity to see the places they had never seen before. Interestingly enough, the youngsters who introduced this practice were second-year tourism students so this event was of particular importance for them too since they had a chance to be guides for the elderly and tell them as much as they knew about their city. Read the following website for more information on this practice: [FIND HERE](#) (accessed on 20 April 2020).

available tools and methodologies

FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION

Lithuania, being a small young country with continuously rising rates of emigration, has not developed its own tools and methodologies for teaching youth workers about the involvement of seniors yet. Therefore, it must adopt such tools and methodologies from other countries where they seem to function well. One of the best source of information for available tools and methodologies for teaching youth workers about the involvement of seniors is the United Nations, whose member Lithuania became soon after it got its independence. According to the United Nations, all member states should incorporate the following principles into their national programmes: Independence, Participation, Care, Self-fulfilment, and Dignity (see Table 11 below). Lithuania, as a member of the United Nations, is able to follow those principles and, by doing that, will guarantee that appropriate and needed social programmes are created, enabling seniors to participate in social life actively and at the same time providing more opportunities for the youth to be included in different activities with the elderly.

Table 11. United Nations Principles for Older Persons.

Independence

1. Older persons should have access to adequate food, water, shelter, clothing and health care through the provision of income, family and community support and self-help.
2. Older persons should have the opportunity to work or to have access to other income-generating opportunities.
3. Older persons should be able to participate in determining when and at what pace withdrawal from the labour force takes place.
4. Older persons should have access to appropriate educational and training programmes.
5. Older persons should be able to live in environments that are safe and adaptable to personal preferences and changing capacities.
6. Older persons should be able to reside at home for as long as possible.

Participation

7. Older persons should remain integrated in society, participate actively in the formulation and implementation of policies that directly affect their well-being and share their knowledge and skills with younger generations.
8. Older persons should be able to seek and develop opportunities for service to the community and to serve as volunteers in positions appropriate to their interests and capabilities.
9. Older persons should be able to form movements or associations of older persons.

Care

10. Older persons should benefit from family and community care and protection in accordance with each society's system of cultural values.
11. Older persons should have access to health care to help them to maintain or regain the optimum level of physical, mental and emotional well-being and to prevent or delay the onset of illness.
12. Older persons should have access to social and legal services to enhance their autonomy, protection and care.
13. Older persons should be able to utilize appropriate levels of institutional care providing protection, rehabilitation and social and mental stimulation in a humane and secure environment.
14. Older persons should be able to enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms when residing in any shelter, care or treatment facility, including full respect for their dignity, beliefs, needs and privacy and for the right to make decisions about their care and the quality of their lives.

Self-fulfilment

15. Older persons should be able to pursue opportunities for the full development of their potential.
 16. Older persons should have access to the educational, cultural, spiritual and recreational resources of society.
-

Dignity

17. Older persons should be able to live in dignity and security and be free of exploitation and physical or mental abuse.
18. Older persons should be treated fairly regardless of age, gender, racial or ethnic background, disability or other status, and be valued independently of their economic contribution.

Source:

United Nations: United Nations Principles for Older Persons Adopted by General Assembly resolution 46/91 of 16 December 1991 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/olderpersons.aspx> (accessed on 23 April 2020).

The Charity Commission, which is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales, also provided some tools and methodologies that can be used to promote social inclusion. According to this commission, the most important elements of promoting social inclusion are (cc):

1. Helping socially excluded people and communities overcome limitations (especially inequality and disadvantage), arising as a result of the circumstances in which an individual is born or has been living for a long time; and



2. Encouraging equality of opportunities, i.e. creating equal opportunities for people who are excluded and eliminating discrimination, which may also pave the path to the promotion of equality and diversity.

Youth organisations could take an active role in helping the elderly overcome the limitations that they face due to their age and creating equal opportunities through the help of volunteers or social workers. However, it shall also be noted that not all youth organisations can promote social inclusion. According to the Charity Commission, an organisation whose aims include promoting social inclusion must demonstrate that (cc):

- it performs its activities amongst socially excluded people, i.e. seniors;
- those activities contribute to the public benefit;
- those activities can increase socially excluded people's inclusion in society, i.e. there is a clear link between the activities and the aim;
- those activities must be beneficial; and
- it provides a clear and sustainable definition of social exclusion.

One more methodology leading to youth contribution to the involvement of seniors into social activities was provided by Miller et al (2015). This methodology is based on the following tools: 1) programmes that identify those in need and connect them with assistance; 2) group programmes; 3) one-to-one programmes; 4) counselling programmes; 5) connecting via the internet and internet training programmes; 6) volunteering; 7) intergenerational programmes; 8) tools to increase personal capacity and economic self-sufficiency.

According to this recent methodology, it is important to start from creating programs that identify those who are in need and connect them with assistance. This means creating either Gatekeeper programmes or Community Navigator programmes. Gatekeeper programmes train people who come into regular contact with seniors (e.g. health care providers, library staff etc.) to recognize and identify socially isolated older adults. This model is a successful way to identify at-risk people and introduce them to support services that can reduce their social isolation. Community Navigator programmes, on the other hand, train people to provide vulnerable people, including seniors, with practical, emotional and social support, which helps individuals to find and connect with appropriate services or programmes.

Group programmes can include: 1) activity-based programmes, e.g. cultural, artistic, physical or other interest-based activities; 2) psychosocial groups that address psychological or social issues and concerns of participants; 3) friendship groups that focus on developing friendships; 4) educational groups that provide a purposeful learning objective.

However, even though group programmes are of high importance these days, because of ill health, limited mobility or lack of

access to transportation, a lot of seniors find it difficult, or even impossible, to attend groups. As a result, programmes that seek to reduce social isolation by providing an opportunity for the development of one-to-one relationships between seniors and youth are very important. Two most adaptable one-to-one programmes are: 1) befriending (it generally involves either home visiting or telephone contact with a volunteer or a staff person), and 2) mentoring (it is more goal-oriented than befriending). It shall be highlighted that the friendly disposition and good social skills of a matched friend are of great importance in one-to-one programmes, and reliability and regularity of contact shall be guaranteed as random visits are not effective.

Counselling or psychotherapeutic programmes are aimed to address an existing problem and stop it from becoming more serious. Counselling does not target social exclusion per se but it addresses risk factors related to social isolation, such as depression or the experience of loss. Counselling can be provided only by a very skilled person, most preferably a professional therapist.

Connecting via the internet and internet training programmes appear to be really cost-efficient. The internet works as a way for seniors to communicate inexpensively, frequently and easily with family and friends regardless of distance, as well as a means to meet new friends who have similar interests. However, many seniors are not familiar or comfortable with using the internet or other new technology. Therefore, some special training might be needed before starting to implement these programmes. For example, youth workers could provide initial training how to use modern technologies for those who may be struggling.

Volunteering appears as a very good and interactive way of promoting the involvement of seniors into social activities. Importantly enough, older adults who volunteer experience increased feelings of self-confidence and self-worth, strong feelings of purpose and meaning in life and feelings of connection to the community and contribution to society. However, volunteering should be taken very carefully and only meaningful volunteer opportunities shall be provided. It is recommended, if possible, to offer stipends to volunteers (whether they are young people or older adults) and provide support to volunteers from paid staff. Volunteer engagement should include some form of social interaction and ensure that volunteers are recognized for their input.

Intergenerational programmes are specifically created to engage older adults and younger generations in the same programme with a mutually beneficial result. Intergenerational programming is very diverse and includes a wide variety of activities such as home maintenance, homework help, delivery service for seniors, community projects, choirs, art groups etc. There are four main types of intergenerational programmes: 1) older people helping youth (e.g. homework help); 2) youth helping older people (e.g. home maintenance); 3) older people and youth collaborating to help their community (e.g. community project); 4) older



people and youth engaging together in learning or social activities (e.g. choir). These intergenerational tools reduce negative stereotypes and attitudes for both seniors and younger generations, decrease social isolation, increase personal and social development, thus contributing to the overall wellbeing of individuals as well as communities.

Last but not least, programs to increase personal capacity and economic self-sufficiency are meant for low-income seniors and aim to increase their income or decrease their expenses as this may indirectly prevent social isolation. For example, helping low-income seniors obtain benefits or transfer payments to which they are entitled, but not receiving, or reducing medical costs may free up the means to increase social engagement and more active participation in society's life. These programmes include the following tools: 1) financial literacy programmes (teaching seniors the skills to manage one's personal finances); 2) home sharing (an arrangement between two unrelated people to share a living space to their mutual benefit); 3) home maintenance and home improvement (combating the limited resources and physical barriers of seniors to create a pleasant living environment for them); 4) time banking (this is a scheme by which people earn credits by spending time helping others either member-to-member or in community service projects); 5) food delivery (providing adequate resources for proper nutrition that leads to the health and well-being of older adults).

All of the abovementioned tools and methodologies are highly adaptable. Therefore, even though Lithuania is a small and young country which has not developed its own tools and methodologies, it is still able to use the ideas suggested by the United Nations, the Charity Commission and Miller et al (2015) in order to teach youth workers about the involvement of seniors. This would help reduce social exclusion and, naturally, increase social inclusion, merging the gap between two generations, youths and senior citizens.

ideas on how to best engage seniors and youth

As it was established earlier in this paper, the questionnaire in Appendix 1 showed that the dominant occupation among senior citizens is being a pensioner, which implies that the majority of them do not work and have quite a lot of free time. This time could be used for various activities which can bring youths and seniors together. However, in Lithuania, such activities do not seem to be immensely popular with members in either of the groups (see Table 12). Among youths, only 23% had participated in youth-senior activities; among senior citizens the situation is slightly better – 52% of the senior respondents claimed that they had been involved in such kind of activities.

Table 12. Experience in youth–senior activities.

Experience	Young people (aged 18–29)		Senior citizens (aged 65 and over)	
	Number of respondents	Share of percentage per age group	Number of respondents	Share of percentage per age group
Participated	7	23%	42	58%
Did not participated	23	77%	30	42%

On the whole, the respondents evinced an avid interest in youth–senior activities (see Table 13). Among the youth, even 30% of the respondents would like to take part in social inclusion activities that bring youths and seniors together. Among the seniors, the interest was even stronger – even 51% of the respondents expressed a willingness to be included in social activities. Furthermore, the general tendency was that those people who had tried such activities would like to participate in them once again. For example, 17% of the young respondents who claimed to have no interest in such kind of activities had never tried them before. In addition to that, the number of people who expressed low interest in participating in social inclusion activities is quite similar in both the age groups: 53% of the young people were not sure about participating in social inclusion events with seniors, and 42% of the senior citizens were not certain about taking part in social inclusion activities with youth. This data shows that in general social inclusion activities for bringing youths and seniors together in Lithuania are regarded as a positive thing. However, since the number of people who have never participated in such kind of activities is rather big (see Table 12 above), it is no surprise why some people, both young and old, are a little bit sceptical about these activities. Therefore, youth–senior activities should be highly promoted and made available for everyone so that every person has a chance to participate in social inclusion events and only after that decide whether they would like to try them again or not.

Table 13. Interest in youth–senior activities.

Interest	Young people (aged 18–29)		Senior citizens (aged 65 and over)	
	Number of respondents	Share of percentage per age group	Number of respondents	Share of percentage per age group
Great interest (would like to try)	9	30%	37	51%
Low interest (maybe would try)	16	53%	30	42%
No interest (would not try)	5	17%	5	7%

When asked to specify what kind of youth–senior activities would be the most interesting, young people and senior citizens shared similar views. Top 3 activities in both the age groups are leisure (e.g. events, concerts, exhibitions, conferences etc.), arts and crafts (e.g. drawing, painting, handcraft etc.), and volunteering (see Table 14). An interesting tendency can be noticed when analysing religious and physical (e.g. sports, dances, Nordic walking etc.) activities: more young people are interested in sports (37%) than in religion (27%), whereas more seniors are into religion (29%) than sports (17%). Nevertheless, sport and religion still play a pivotal role and there is a clear need to organise such kind of activities. In addition to that, some respondents from both the age groups (less than 10%) mentioned their interest in games (e.g. board games, brain battle etc.), cooking and educating others (e.g. youths were willing to teach seniors about modern technology and how to use the Internet, while seniors were eager to teach youth about life from their own experience, to elicit the importance of health etc.). When asked to write any other activities that would be of interest for them, young people wrote about their interest in storytelling (i.e. listening to seniors' stories, experiences, advice etc.), dancing and singing. Senior citizens wrote about being interested in literature (e.g. books clubs, poetry nights etc.), travel, gardening, cultural and ethno-cultural activities, historical activities, eco-friendly activities (ecology).

Table 14. Most interesting activities for seniors and youth.

Activities	Young people (aged 18-29)		Senior citizens (aged 65 and over)	
	Number of respondents	Share of percentage per age group	Number of respondents	Share of percentage per age group
Leisure	22	73%	49	68%
Arts and crafts	18	60%	25	35%
Volunteering	15	50%	24	33%
Religion	8	27%	21	29%
Sports	11	37%	12	17%
Games	2	7%	2	3%
Cooking	2	7%	1	1%
Educating	1	3%	3	4%

Not only do the respondents express a considerable interest in youth–senior activities, they also announce an increased willingness to actually contribute to organising such events (see Table 15). Tendencies here are pretty similar to those described in the previous paragraph – only a small amount of the respondents (around 20%) claimed to have no willingness to contribute to the organisation of activities for youths and seniors, which might be related to the aforementioned reason that they have not

tried any similar activities and, consequently, have no real understanding of them.

Willingness	Young people (aged 18-29)		Senior citizens (aged 65 and over)	
	Number of respondents	Share of percentage per age group	Number of respondents	Share of percentage per age group
Great willingness (would like to contribute)	9	30%	26	36%
Low willingness (maybe would contribute)	13	43%	32	44%
No willingness (would not contribute)	8	27%	14	20%

Table 15. Willingness to contribute to organising youth-senior activities.

Volunteering is one of the top 3 activities that youths and seniors find particularly engaging and attractive so no surprise quite a number of people would agree to contribute to organising activities for bringing youths and seniors together on a voluntary basis: 40% of the young people were absolutely positive about this idea (and 43% claimed that they might consider this idea), 36% of the seniors also supported this idea (and 38% pointed out that they might consider volunteering for such purposes). When asked to specify what activities they would like to contribute to on a voluntary basis, young people and senior citizens shared similar but this time slightly more diverse views (see Table 16). Among youth, event planning (e.g. organising a concert or a campaign etc.) and socio-cultural activities (e.g. guided tours, cultural visits, linguistic and cultural exchanges etc.) are the most engaging activities. Among seniors, on the other hand, community initiatives (e.g. mutual support programmes; providing help and/or information through the phone or email; campaigns by art, sport, business (or another common interest) associations or clubs etc.) and one-on-one tutorials (e.g. educating other people on a one-to-one basis, providing them with relevant information etc.) are the most attractive activities. However, a lot of young people also share positive views regarding one-on-one tutorials and community services, as well as quite a number of seniors like the idea of event planning and socio-cultural activities. Home visiting seems to be more popular among the young: even 57% of the young respondents supported this idea, while seniors remained more sceptical (25% of the elderly liked the idea of home visiting for volunteering). Least engaging activities for volunteering in both of these age groups appeared to be organising transport (e.g. for children, patients, disabled people with physical and mobility impairments etc.) and providing personal hygiene services. This simply might be because of the fact that transport and hygiene require very specific knowledge and/or experience, and neither youths nor seniors feel that they have enough knowledge in those fields. Therefore, providing activities related to logistics and health shall not be forgotten.



Table 16. Activities to engage seniors and youth on a voluntary basis.

Activities	Young people (aged 18–29)		Senior citizens (aged 65 and over)	
	Number of respondents	Share of percentage per age group	Number of respondents	Share of percentage per age group
Education	16	53%	24	33%
Community initiatives	12	40%	21	29%
Home visiting	17	57%	18	25%
Event planning	19	63%	16	22%
Socio-cultural services	19	63%	16	22%
Organising transport	8	27%	4	6%
Hygiene services	2	7%	4	6%

The discussion in this paper shows that the most important activities to engage seniors and youth can be grouped into eight categories: 1) leisure, 2) arts and crafts, 3) volunteering, 4) religion, 5) physical activities, 6) intellectual activities, 7) social activities, and 8) others. These activities can be implemented in Lithuania by following the principles proposed by the United Nations, creating programmes based on Miller et al (2015)'s methodology and collaborating with companies that comply with the requirements for organisations laid down by the Charity Commission. Table 17 summarises the best ideas to engage senior citizens and youth into common activities. These ideas are examples of some activities that can be offered in order to bring seniors and youth together. Most of those specific ideas were mentioned by the respondents themselves, some were included based on the available tools/methodologies when speaking about the context of Lithuania. All the activities and programmes were grouped and categorised based on types and available tools and methods discussed in the previous sections of this paper.

Table 17. Ideas on how to best engage seniors and youth.

Type of Activities	Tools/Methods	Specific ideas on how to best engage seniors and youth
Leisure activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integrating leisure activities in programmes. 2. Incorporating the United Nations principle of Self-fulfilment into national programmes. 3. Using group programmes, as well as one-on-one programmes. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Events. 2. Concerts. 3. Exhibitions. 4. Conferences. 5. Cinema. 6. Theatre. 7. Opera.
Arts and crafts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integrating interest in arts and crafts to develop skills in these fields. 2. Incorporating the United Nations principles of Independence and Self-fulfilment into national programmes. 3. Using group, one-on-one and intergenerational programmes. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Drawing. 2. Painting. 3. Making handcraft. 4. Wood carving. 5. Sewing. 6. Knitting. 7. Photography.
Volunteering	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integrating interest in volunteering to show how useful it can be when solving various real life problems. 2. Incorporating the United Nations principles of Participation and Dignity into national programmes. 3. Using volunteering programmes. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Health care. 2. Cosmetics. 3. Storytelling. 4. SOS Children's Villages. 5. Forest cleaning (litter pick-up). 6. Tree planting. 7. Animal rescue shelters. 8. Guiding at national parks or city centres (old towns).
Religion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Using activities that will contribute to people's spiritual well-being. 2. Incorporating the United Nations principle of Self-fulfilment into national programmes. 3. Using group and one-on-one programmes. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Church (masses). 2. Bible studies. 3. Recollections. 4. Religious festivals (feasts). 5. Meditation. 6. Matrimonial services.
Physical activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integrating physical activities in programmes. 2. Incorporating the United Nations principles of Care and Self-fulfilment into national programmes. 3. Using group, one-on-one and intergenerational programmes. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Workout/exercise/Zumba. 2. Dancing (e.g. Tango etc.). 3. Nordic walking. 4. Aerobics. 5. Swimming or diving. 6. Cycling. 7. Jogging or running (marathons). 8. Physical games (e.g. tennis, golf etc.). 9. Gardening.
Intellectual activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Using intellectual activities to stimulate critical thinking, logical reasoning and debates/discussions. 2. Incorporating the United Nations principles of Care and Self-fulfilment into national programmes. 3. Using group, one-on-one and intergenerational programmes. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Book club. 2. Poetry nights. 3. Solving puzzles. 4. Creating songs. 5. Board games. 6. Brain battle.

	<p>1. Conducting social activities to create a sense of neighbourhood and build stronger friendships.</p> <p>2. Involving family members in common activities with youth and seniors.</p> <p>3. Using social activities to engage both youth and seniors in participatory governance.</p> <p>4. Incorporating the United Nations principles of Independence, Participation, Self-fulfilment and Dignity into national programmes.</p> <p>5. Using group, one-on-one and intergenerational programmes.</p>	<p>1. Family day.</p> <p>2. Organising a picnic with your neighbours.</p> <p>3. Cultural (ethno-cultural) activities.</p> <p>4. Historical activities.</p> <p>5. Museum and gallery openings.</p> <p>6. Meetup groups.</p> <p>7. Shopping together.</p> <p>8. Seminars/conferences/ workshops on being an active member of society.</p> <p>9. Elections.</p> <p>10. Eating out.</p> <p>11. Home visiting.</p> <p>12. Best buddy programmes.</p> <p>13. Event planning activities.</p>
Others	<p>1. Knowledge exchange – demonstrating your own skills to train the elderly or youth, using skill training programmes.</p> <p>2. Using examples to educate (e.g. using real life problems to reach target groups).</p> <p>3. Incorporating the United Nations principles of Independence, Participation, Care, Self-fulfilment and Dignity into national programmes.</p> <p>4. Using all the tools provided by Miller et al (2015): a) programmes that identify those in need and connect them with assistance; b) group programmes; c) one-to-one programmes; d) counselling programmes; e) connecting via the internet and internet training programmes; f) volunteering; g) intergenerational programmes; h) tools to increase personal capacity and economic self-sufficiency.</p>	<p>1. Cooking.</p> <p>2. Work and travel programmes.</p> <p>3. Eco-friendly activities.</p> <p>4. Historical activities (e.g. visiting old places, buildings).</p> <p>5. Teaching seniors IT (computer literacy) skills.</p> <p>6. Educating youth about the importance of health at an early age.</p> <p>7. Hygiene services.</p> <p>8. Organising transport.</p> <p>9. Mentoring programmes.</p> <p>10. Youth–senior project management.</p> <p>11. Celebrations.</p>

conclusions

LITHUANIA'S POPULATION:

The continuously growing numbers of older people in Lithuania require diverse social, economic and cultural changes which are vital in order to secure further gradual development of the country. Therefore, one of the crucial challenges that Lithuania needs to rise to is the implementation of fundamental structural reforms at social, educational, cultural and economic levels so that the gap between the old and the young is bridged, resulting in a greatly reduced social exclusion of senior citizens.

Lithuania is facing three key issues which are common all around Europe, namely 1) increasing longevity (life expectancy), 2) low birth rates and 3) the greying of the baby boom generation. All these issues lead to an inescapable conclusion that older people make up a growingly large proportion of the population in Lithuania.

There are three key factors indicating whether society is aging or not: 1) median age, 2) aging index, and 3) dependency ratio or age-dependency ratio. All these indexes in Lithuania are high, which clearly shows that Lithuania's population is ageing. This means that the proportion of people of working age is shrinking, while the relative number of those retired is expanding.

SENIORS' SITUATION IN LITHUANIA:

The ageing of the Lithuanian population is proportional, i.e. when the proportion of children is shrinking, the proportion of older people is growing correspondingly.

Regarding the composition of the population of senior citizens in Lithuania, there are more women than men: males constitute 34% of the senior citizens, while women 66%.

Even though senior citizens are the most educated people in Lithuania, their share of percentage in high-powered jobs is the smallest among all the age groups.

The main reasons why Lithuanian seniors face acute social problems are related to health, living conditions, losing important people, lack of education, the character of a person and society's attitude to the elderly.

TOOLS AND METHODOLOGIES:

According to the United Nations, all member states should incorporate the following principles into their national programmes: Independence, Participation, Care, Self-fulfilment, and Dignity.



The Charity Commission proposed that the most important elements of promoting social inclusion are: 1) helping socially excluded people and communities overcome limitations (especially inequality and disadvantage), and 2) encouraging equality of opportunities.

One more methodology leading to youth contribution to the involvement of seniors into social activities was provided by Miller et al (2015). This methodology is based on the following tools: 1) programmes that identify those in need and connect them with assistance; 2) group programmes; 3) one-to-one programmes; 4) counselling programmes; 5) connecting via the internet and internet training programmes; 6) volunteering; 7) intergenerational programmes; 8) tools to increase personal capacity and economic self-sufficiency.

All of the abovementioned tools and methodologies are highly adaptable. Therefore, even though Lithuania is a small and young country which has not developed its own tools and methodologies, it is still able to use the ideas suggested by the United Nations, the Charity Commission and Miller et al (2015) in order to teach youth workers about the involvement of seniors. This would help reduce social exclusion and, naturally, increase social inclusion, merging the gap between two generations, youths and senior citizens.

IDEAS TO PROMOTE SOCIAL INCLUSION:

In general, social inclusion activities for bringing youths and seniors together in Lithuania are regarded as a positive thing. However, since the number of people who have never participated in such kind of activities is rather big, it is no surprise why some people, both young and old, are a little bit sceptical about these activities. Therefore, youth-senior activities should be highly promoted and made available for everyone so that every person has a chance to participate in social inclusion events and only after that decide whether they would like to try them again or not.

The most important activities to engage seniors and youth can be grouped into eight categories: 1) leisure, 2) arts and crafts, 3) volunteering, 4) religion, 5) physical activities, 6) intellectual activities, 7) social activities, and 8) others. These activities can be implemented in Lithuania by following the principles proposed by the United Nations, creating programmes based on Miller et al (2015)'s methodology and collaborating with companies that comply with the requirements for organisations laid down by the Charity Commission.

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appendix 1

QUESTIONNAIRE IN LITHUANIA

1. Jūsų amžius.

2. Jūsų lytis.

3. Jūsų išsilavinimas?

4. Jūsų pareigos arba pagrindinis užsiėmimas?

5. Ar Jums teko dalyvauti bendruose senjorų-jaunimo užsiėmimuose?

6. Ar norėtum dalyvauti bendruose senjorų-jaunimo užsiėmimuose?

7. Jeigu į ankstesni klausimų atsakėte "Taip", kokio pobūdžio veiklų labiausiai norėtumėte?

8. Ar norėtumėte prisiidėti prie šių veiklų organizavimo?

9. Ar sutiktumėte šiose veiklose (pvz., socialinė priežiūra, pagalba namuose ar kt.) dalyvauti savanoriškais pagrindais?

10. Kuriose iš šių veiklų sutiktumėte dalyvauti savanoriškais pagrindais?

(galima pasirinkti nuo 1 iki 3 įrašų)

(Jeigu veiklose savanoriškais pagrindais dalyvauti nesutiktumėte, šį klausimą praleiskite)

11. Kokios, Jūsų manymu, yra pagrindinės senjorų socialinės izoliacijos priežastys?

(galima pasirinkti nuo 1 iki 3 įrašų)

12. Kokie yra pagrindiniai, senjorų, rūpesčiai ar problemas su kuriomis susiduriate?

(galima pasirinkti nuo 1 iki 3 įrašų)

13. Prie kokios bendros senjorų-jaunimo veiklos norėtumėte prisijungti?

(galima pasirinkti nuo 1 iki 3 įrašų)

14. Kas, jūsų manymu, labiausiai padėtų integruoti jaunimą ir senjorus?