



Health, Security and Community

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Shops of knowledge

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Regarding active ageing it is very important to enhance researches that analyze best practices in optimizing “opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age” (WHO, 1999). Active ageing allows people to realize their potential for physical, social, and mental well-being throughout the life course and to participate in society, while providing them with adequate education, protection, security and care when they need. Active ageing aims to extend healthy life expectancy and quality of life throughout the life cycle and can be enhanced at an individual or at community level. Several research-based interventions with the aim of empowering socially and psychologically disadvantaged elder individuals have been proposed and promoted. Namely, based mindfulness interventions with institutionalized elder people with chronic pain; self development groups in day centers etc. but few interventions appeal to seniors full participation as proposed in Shops of Knowledge.

A group of retired citizens, that completed their professional lives and accumulated important knowledge, in diversified areas, decided to make available their skills, and acquired experience to those wishing to improve their learning and expertise. As a consequence "Shops of knowledge" were created with the aim on voluntary based transmission of information and experience with the younger generations. This is particularly important since many thousands of pensioners in full physical and intellectual condition are willing to maintain a socially useful activity and, as a result of the absence of framework

conditions, remain isolated and frustratingly passive. On the other hand many citizens can find motivation and utility in the vast offer of courses and other activities of the project Shops of knowledge.

In this communication we describe the main features of this type of project, its advantages and impact in the quality of life of the seniors involved and of the overall community. At the same time it is stressed the importance of the shift of paradigm underlined in this type of research-based interventions - from a welfarist perspective to a model that strains activity, participation and empowerment.

Shops of knowledge

The sustained growth of this country or, in other words, its future, depends strongly on how quickly we manage to win the battle for the qualification of people. To achieve this, all contributions are necessary and welcome.

Accordingly, retired citizens, that completed their professional lives and assured the acquisition of important bulks of knowledge, in diversified areas, could make available their skills, and acquired experience to those wishing to improve their learning and expertise, contributing to the overall development and preventing society the unnecessary loss of their assets, so frequently neglected.

The key word for the project is voluntarism after retirement, aimed at exploiting the more specialized potentialities acquired by people in their careers or other activities and involves the concept of a voluntarily return to society of what is most valuable in the acquired experience of each person.

For this, we decided to create what we called "Shops of knowledge" which will essentially be focused on transmission of information and experience between generations.

From a social point of view, we consider to be fulfilling a duty of citizenship by returning to the younger generation what was conveyed to us and we acquired throughout life. Simultaneously, we seek to participate with voluntary social work, giving a contribution where the breaking of the isolation and sense of futility of many retirees is bound to giving a powerful aid to needy sectors of general interest in human resources.

This is particularly important since Portugal has now many thousands of pensioners in full physical and intellectual condition, willing to maintain a socially useful activity and, as a result of the absence of framework conditions, remain isolated and frustratingly passive. This is a socially absurd waste that the creation of Shops of knowledge will help to reduce. On the other hand the citizens and particularly the unemployed can find motivation and utility in the vast offer of courses and other activities of Shops of knowledge.

Basically Shops of knowledge is a non-profitable institution which aims to save the best experience of people who played professional activities, specialized or not, in many areas and that are now retired but want to offer their expertise for free and committed to elements of society who wish to complete their education, improve their skills or learn new activities.

The intention is not to create hobbies but take the extraordinary data bases that are the brains of large numbers of retirees, with invaluable information, using it to improve professionally or to enhance the knowledge of people who wish, are unemployed or not, having or not advanced formation.

Knowledge Shops offer

- *Courses*

- *Interviews*

- *Creation and keeping of a Web site, hosting:*

(1) Report of activities

(2) Section on dissemination of advice and concepts arising from the experience of the older, written and performed by them

(3) Reports of interviews

(4) Page of proposals from readers

- Publication of an: "*Yearbook of the experience learned secrets of retired people*" with the participation of national and foreign authors. It is intended to be a book with international expansion, where a range of topics, useful references and experiences by noteworthy authors are presented.

- *Conferences by retired celebrities.*

- *Thematic Forums.*

Courses

Knowledge schools will have:

i) Extension courses of professional development, prepared after consultation with Schools and Institutes of the corresponding areas.

ii) Courses designed to bridge traditional deficiencies of practitioners active in several areas.

iii) General courses of additional interest in professional performance.

iv) Advanced courses on very specific issues.

v) Meetings of small groups focused in specific matters moderated by experienced people

General examples of courses could be:

"Reading charts, plants and maps. New technologies,"

"Statistics for evaluation of small companies "

"Practical uses of general computers,"

"Noise pollution"

- "Protection against physical agents at work"
- "Complements of medical protection at work"
- "Strategies for improving performance at work".
- "Informatics in professional evaluation,"
- "Stocks management"
- "Running a small business,"
- "Fundamentals and maintenance of electric motors,"
- "Practical Elements of mechanics and strength of materials,"
- "Basic Medical optics and applications,"
- "Databases,"
- "Using the Internet as a professional weapon,"
- "Alternating current basic and applications,"
- "Trigonometry and basic topography,"
- "Dental mechanics,"
- "Complements of biomechanics,"
- "Notes on practical applications of information technology in organizations,"
- "Political Organization,"
- "Language",
- "Europe political organization"
- "Heredity"
- "Globalization"
- "Biological Thermodynamics"
- "Techniques of medical imaging."

These courses do not integrate a plan of studies, can be administered only once and only be held if there is a number of registrations higher than a minimum to be established.

As a rule the courses of Shops of Knowledge have evaluation and diplomas with the simple purpose of improving curriculum, will be emitted. They are not intended to compete with any degrees, specializations, or whatever.

Although Shops of knowledge are mainly intended to retired citizens, nothing prevents younger members to collaborate on the project if they offer added value to the institution.

In the Shop of Knowledge a Scientific Council has regulatory functions that include the assessment of the interest, content and form of the courses to be taught.