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PhD Course in Pedagogical, Educational and Instructional Sciences XXXII COURSE

Older people beyond borders: older adults' education in universities of the third age and impact in their lives

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ABSTRACT

The importance of education and lifelong learning, especially when linked to the idea of ageing, it is becoming clearer day by day. The lower index of mortality and nativity is conducting to drastic demographical changes in a global level. If we investigate for this scenario of structural ageing, in countries such as Italy and Portugal (between the countries "more old" in Europe), we can find a clear problem: there are not educational policies for the older adults. However, besides this structural lack, in the last decades it was possible to see various activities directed to old adults, mainly organized by the Universities of the Third Age (U3A). These contexts seem to represent an opportunity for adults to exercise the mind and the body, to develop and cultivate interests and desires, to build and maintain relationships, to discover and perform new roles and activities, and renewed or enhance identity aspects. Studying some cultural and social contexts developing educational activities (U3A), their activities and talking with adults participating, would provide a clearer notion and an idea of the work being developed and the impacts in adults participating in. This research aim is to understand how different cultural and social contexts, developing old adult education activities give learners outcomes that can respond to their needs, and consequently contribute for their well-being. To respond to the aim we designed a research based in observation and interviews in four diverse contexts in order to understand the developed practices and the participation of adults, the motives that bring adults to it, who are they participating and how they perceive the results of these participating (outcomes in their lives). The personal meanings and educational experiences seem to be essential for their decision in order to participate. Being a multiple cases study, the results cannot be generalisable, but they seem to provide a clear and interesting view on the world of the U3A and adults participating in it, their needs and how participation in education can cater to it.

Key-words: adult education, older, needs, universities of the third age

Introduction

Education, according to UNESCO (1976; 2010), is a universal right and as such, a principle that has sustained its initiatives over the years. This universal concept includes adult education. In a globalized era characterized by rapid changes and technological advances in society, adult education seems to be increasingly important (Ricardo, 2019). On the other hand, given the increase in the number of older people, the education of older adults appears as an emerging concern. Education and learning seem to emancipate adults, giving them knowledge and skills to improve their lives. In addition to benefiting the individual at the personal level, they consequently benefit their families, communities and societies (UNESCO, 2010).

Over the years, UNESCO has sought to develop some work towards proposing educational and learning objectives, particularly with regard to adult learning. According to this organisation, the 'framework created by the concept of lifelong learning must lead to education without frontiers' (p.14), i.e. it is important to create diverse, open, flexible and relevant opportunities for adults at all stages of their lives. UNESCO therefore states that it is important to provide learning environments and processes that are attractive and adapted to adults as active citizens, who are willing to build and rebuild themselves in a complex and constantly changing society (UNESCO, 2010) so that they can keep pace with the changing world.

It is in this sense that the Universities of the Third Age (U3A) seem to emerge as a response to the educational and social needs of older adults. When we talk about Universities of Third Age (U3A) it brings us to a broader premise that is education, and education in the broadest sense. Transcending school education, this contemplate other contexts and educational methods including non-formal education and informal education.

Regarding the importance of these contexts, Formosa (2014) states that the U3A has the function of creating a society in which ageing is seen as positive, where the old adults are not discriminated against by their age, but are valued by their participation, experience and abilities. Several studies (Gregianin, 2011; Pocinho, 2014; Veloso, 2011) have shown the importance of the U3A for individuals, but it is still unclear what they learn and how adults learn in these contexts, and what are the outcomes that come from participation. In this research, four examples of U3A will be presented, which seek to answer these questions.

Organisational structure of the document

The document is divided into two parts: the first includes the theoretical part of the research, with a first chapter dedicated to the Situation of the old adult today. We offer a general perspective about the demographic situation and future perspectives regarding old adults. The second chapter focuses the concepts of "Ageing" and "third age" that are central to understand the evolution of the society and how concepts adapt to it. As third chapter we consider the social needs based in Maslow theory. The aim of this chapter is to introduce the main individual needs of Maslow focusing the importance of the social needs for these individuals, and how society could organize themselves to deal with it. In the fourth chapter we focus the Adult Education contributions from international organisations. We present a glimpse from organizations such as UNESCO and European Union that from years develop work in the field of education. Being some of the work related with adults. Then the fifth chapter is dedicated to Adults participation and learning in Portugal and Italy; we present some empirical data that show that adult learning activities varies according to demographic, socioeconomic, and cultural factors. Afterwards we define Adult Education and learning (models and practices). Following the last chapter, this one focuses the education and learning specifically for the older adults. For last, we close the theoretical part with a chapter that regards to Education and the Universities of the Third Age.

The second part of the document presents the empirical research. In this part we are going to present the methodology of our research (chapter 9). For it we do a general analysis of the qualitative research. Then, we will focus the case study method used in our research. In second place we will present the research question, context of the research, so as our research design. Here we analyse some of the techniques we used in our research, such as interviews and observation. Finally, we are going to make clear our methodologic choices, referring our research questions and how our methodology can respond to it. The chapter ten corresponds to the presentation of the case studies. Four different cases that were selected (two in Portugal and two in Italy and studied are presented in this chapter. These four studies constituted the cases that gave the body to our research. Following the data in the last chapter (Case Studies Presentation), the chapter eleven is the exploration and discussion of the results. As we said before this research compares the situation of different contexts developing social or cultural practices and that seem to contribute to old adults' life. Though the different contexts and the range of activities that are present, there are some potentialities and high points that we can

analyse collectively. To conduct this discussion, we support ourselves in the four studies and in the sub questions of our research.

The conclusions focus the final results obtained through our research highlighting the importance of educational contexts for adults and their lives.

Personal motivations and intentions of the research

When I finished my degree in 2010, I decided to integrate the Master in Social Education, in order to continue and complete my training. As the Master's Degree was in post labour regime and I was a full-time student, I had my days practically free. I decided that these times of mine should be well used and that I needed an activity that, in addition to occupying the days, helped me to grow intellectually and to develop professional skills, in order to prepare myself for the labour market.

Determined to arrange an activity, I tried to find out from a teacher about any work I could do. My initial idea was to collaborate in a local development association where I could develop knowledge and practice related to Adult Education. In conversation with the teacher, he made me a proposal to collaborate in one of his research projects. So, as a volunteer, I joined the team of the research project "Non-traditional students in higher education: seeking solutions to improve academic success".

This experience in research allowed me to make numerous contacts with students and teachers, and develop skills and knowledge within the research work. The results of these contacts were decisive for my professional practice. It was through this experience and all the contacts and learning that this "moment" gave me that I become interested in scientific research, especially in the field of Adult Education.

After this first "launch" experience, I also had the opportunity to join a Learning Partnership entitled "Older man as active learners in the community" (OMAL) and funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme (Grundtvig). This was a project dedicated to the informal learning of older men in the community. The volunteer work, which lasted one year, allowed me once again to get in touch with the reality of Adult Education. In this project, the first objective was to get to know the informal learning of the elderly in their contexts and in the community (Ricardo, Tavares, Coelho, Lopes & Fragoso, 2014). In this context, I carried out a case study of a fishing club in Faro and was able to reach some conclusions. This fishing club, which was

created in 1956 by a group of eleven friends, is currently a core of champions and is in the top 3 national in terms of prizes received. This research showed that, shortly after the foundation of the club and over the years, the members of the club participated in regional, national and international competitions and were awarded prizes.

In contrast to other similar clubs, this one has a strong socialization component, which occurs at various levels and among the various individuals (gender, age, cultural level). This club fights the isolation of older people and contributes to socialisation and intergenerational learning. On the other hand, the presence of the family and the relationship with the community are also factors that can be found here and that seem to contribute to the well-being of individuals and to the continuity of the club. Thus, based on the study developed, it was possible to conclude that, although the club studied does not have financial support, informal education, friendship and relationships among members seem to be the basis for success and reflect the concepts of belonging and identity (Ricardo et al., 2014).

This was an extremely rich work, which allowed me to explore the education of older people in a community context; to discover a taste for the subject of non-formal and informal education; and to unveil an interest in working with "older people". It was from this experience and the contact I had with all the people who collaborated with me that I decided to continue my studies and enter the PhD in Education. It was also from these experiences that I came to the subject that I intend to study and that I present in this project.

The elderly are people who have a personal richness and an unparalleled experience and who are often ignored and/or excluded because they are no longer seen as productive for society.

In reaction to this position, we believe that it is essential to seek contexts that respond to the needs of adults, and that develop practices that contradict the negative ideas associated with this group. We seek practices that give actors a voice, practices that are co-produced, that promote the participation of individuals and, if possible, find activities that promote in some way the emancipation of individuals and that lead to the transformation of the social condition and living conditions of these individuals.

Relevance of the study

In retirement, many individuals become inactive (Formosa, 2011). Offers of social occupations and contexts for older adults are still very limited (Veloso, 2008). The existing social contexts are mainly day centres, homes and some associations, or in other cases the family itself (when it exists). In this sense, given the lack of social contexts for older adults and, mainly,

educational contexts that allow them to follow the changes that occur in society and continue with an active posture, the Universities of the Third Age (U3A) emerge. We believe that these entities can be an alternative to traditional contexts (homes and associations), mainly with regard to offer the responses to the concrete needs of this age group (personal, social, educational), as for the promotion and development of educational practices due to the activities they carry out.

According to the official documents and research found, we consider that the study of U3A and education of older adults is still an uncommon practice in the international scientific community. In this sense, we believe that it is possible to point out some contributions that this research can make at the theoretical, methodological and empirical levels.

At the theoretical level, changes in the concept of third age and how the old adults live will be addressed, such as the public policies on adult education in Portugal and Italy and the place (or lack thereof) occupied by the education of the older. Although the age group of older people does not fall into an autonomous social category, but into a category of public action, there seems to be a gap in terms of existing public policies (Veloso, 2011). Adult education presents itself as a field that has evolved over time, but there does not yet seem to be a systematic and consistent response in this area of public offers aimed at older adults.

From a methodological point of view, this research aims to show the relevance and richness of the qualitative approach. Through the use of various methods and techniques, we intend to capture data that allow us to make a characterization of the U3A, so as the practices, as well as representations and meanings that individuals attribute to these places. By crossing several techniques, it is possible to obtain information that complements each other and leads to a more reliable and coherent investigation (Olabuénaga, 1999).

Finally, at the empirical level, the aim is to understand how different cultural and social contexts, developing old adult education activities give learners outcomes that can respond to their needs. For it, we studied some realities of the U3A in Portugal and Italy, focusing the educational practices offered by these contexts. These practices can be interpreted on the basis of an analysis that must take into account some criteria, namely the degree of formalisation and participation of individuals, the forms of conception, development and evaluation of these practices, as well as the dynamics of learning.

FIRST PART: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.Situation of the old adult today

1.1. Demographic situation

In recent decades, there have been significant demographic changes, both nationally and worldwide (World Health Organization, 2005). According to United Nations data, the average age of the population in the world and in Europe at the beginning of the 20th century increased from 24 and 30 years, respectively, to 27 and 38 years in 2000. It is also estimated that this proportion will increase and that, by 2050, it may reach values such as 38 years in the world and 47 in Europe (Rosa, 2012).

It is possible to talk in demographic revolution (UN, 2005). During the next few decades, the share of global population aged 60 or more is likely to rise to historically unprecedented levels (see Figure 1 below).
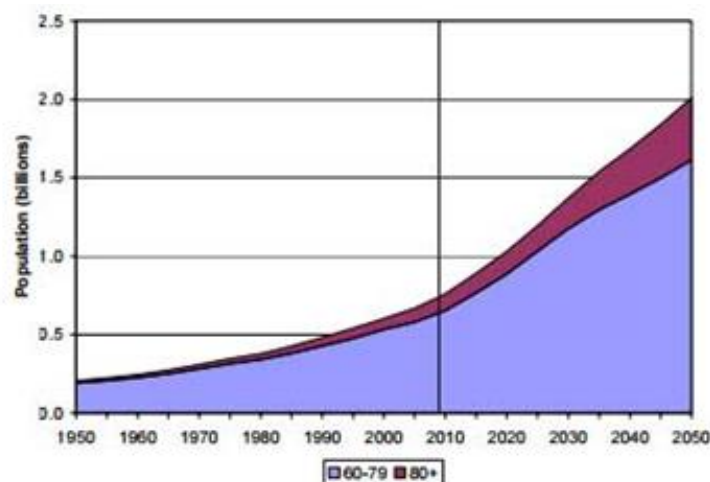
Figure 1: Projected Acceleration of World Population Aging

According to the latest estimates, by 2050 there will be 2 billion people aged over 60 (22% of world population). In 2050, world population is projected to be 3.6 times larger than it was in 1950.

At global level, the share of 80+ people rose from 0.6% in 1950 (15 million) to around 1.6% (110 million) in 2011, and it is expected to reach 4% (400 million) by 2050.

The global population is projected to be 3.7 times bigger in 2050 than in 1950, but the number of 60+ people will increase by 10%, while the number of 80+ people will increase by 26%.

Between 2010 and 2050 the total population will increase by 2 billion, while the older population will increase by 1.3 billion. Today, the European median age is 41, in 2050 it will be 52.

Statistical data seem to justify and legitimize the change taking place and predict the potential change that will increasingly take place in the future in the global context, it is also appropriate to consider the global context. The ageing of the population is an increasingly widespread social phenomenon, with the age pyramid as it stood no more than fifty years ago completely reversed.
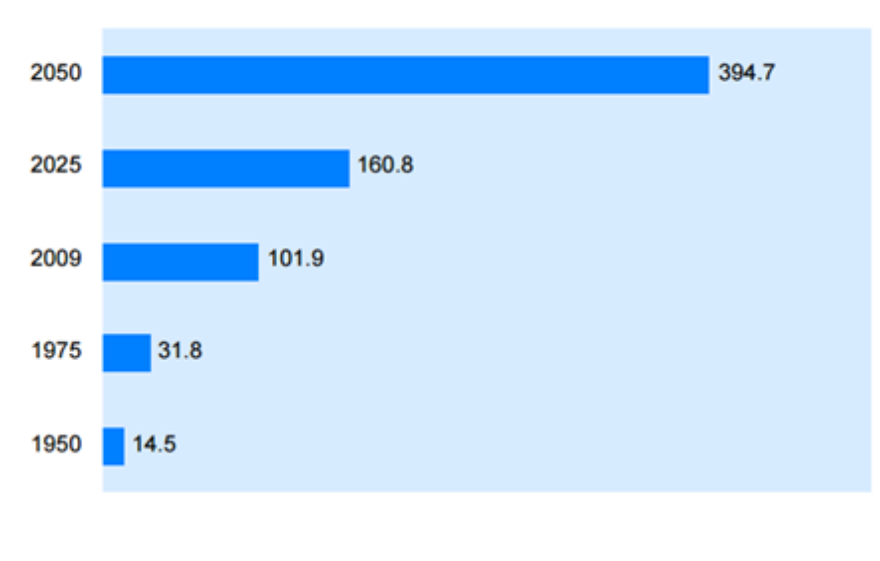
Figure 2: Population age 80 or over: world, 1950-2050 (millions) [1]

Also the graph above shows particularly interesting data: it is expected that in 2050 - worldwide - there will be more than 394.7 million people in their eighties and over, compared to 14.5 million in 1959: the population is aging and over time will age more and more.

In Portugal this evolution is even more significant. According to United Nations forecasts, the average age of the Portuguese population rose from 26 years in 1950 to 38 years in 2000; and it is estimated that by 2050 it could reach 50 years. Thus, according to these figures, the average age of the population seems to grow exponentially. According to Rosa, since 1960 until today, the number of young people has decreased by one million and increased from 29% of the population to 15%, at the same time that the trend is reversed in the group of old adults, who

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[1] UNITED NATIONS, World Population Ageing 2009, *Demographic profile of the older population*

at the same time increased 1.3 million, thus increasing from 8% to 19% of the Portuguese population (Rosa, 2012).

According to data from the National Institute of Statistics, in Portugal, the ageing index increased from 103 to 128 older people per 100 young people between 2001 and 2011 (Instituto Nacional de Estatística, 2013). According to projections of the same institute on the resident population in 2012-2060, demographic ageing will continue to increase markedly. In our country, "the ageing index between 2012 and 2060 may increase from 131 to 307 older people per 100 young people" (INE, March 2014, p. 8). Therefore, the older population will continue to grow. Also according to the projection (INE, 2014), the population aged 65 and over resident in Portugal will increase from 2033 to 3043 thousand, between 2012 and 2060. In 2060, the older population could reach values between 2729 thousand and 3344 thousand.

The data presented show us that demographics are breaking historical records, both in terms of age profile (demonstrated by the increase in the number of old people) and in terms of changes in profile (by the decrease in mortality and fertility rates) (Rosa, 2012). Thus, it seems that we are heading towards an increasingly ageing country.

In Italy, Istat data for the year 2016 show that life expectancy at birth for Italian residents is 80.2 years (+ 0.4 on 2015, + 0.2 on 2014) and compared to 2013 has been extended by more than seven months. Life expectancy at birth is higher for women - 85 years - but the advantage over men -80.6 - is limited to 4.5 years more life. Compared to 40 years ago, the probability of dying in the first year of life has fallen by more than seven times while that of dying at 65 years of age has more than halved.

The Istat (2016) data referring to 1 January 2017 establish that the average age of Italian residents is 44.9 years, two tenths more than in 2006. Individuals aged 65 and over exceed 13 million people and represent 22.3% of the total population (11.7 million in 2007, or 20.1%). In the pyramid of ages, the lowest values are recorded in the age group 0-4 years, thus reflecting a sharp decline in births. Considering that the estimated Italian population in the year 2017 amounts to about 60,589 million people, 22.3% of whom are 65 or over 65, it is by no means an indifferent fact to say that the older population in Italy is growing faster than births (such as in Portugal).

2- Semantics "Ageing" and "third age"

2.1. Ageing

Ageing can be defined as the process that encompasses certain changes in the individual's life. Complementarily, ageing is seen as a biological issue and at the same time as a social issue (Fonseca, 2006) comprising all the life of the individual (Deluigi, 2008). In this line of thought, Rosa (2012) mentions associated concepts such as individual ageing and collective ageing. Individual ageing is related to chronological ageing, which is directed to age. By other side, biopsychological ageing, despite being related to age, is experienced by each individual differently. Collective ageing also includes two other ideas: demographic ageing and societal ageing.

According to Rosa (2012), demographic ageing refers to the population and age categories that define individuals as young, adult and older (and that represent the phases of the life cycle). Societal ageing is reflected in a depressed society that feels threatened by the reality it faces. That is, a society that feels threatened by age evolution and the consequences of this evolution (Rosa, 2012).

When we talk about ageing, it is directly linked to the age of the individual. This age may be biological, psychological or sociological, and will influence the capacities and lives of individuals (Fontaine, 2000). The biological age is associated with organic ageing, the individual's body, its functioning and its ability to self-regulate. Social age is linked to the role, customs and status of the subject that are influenced by the history and culture of his country. Age is linked to the socio-cultural age, which serves to explain behaviours, habits and interpersonal relationships, taking into account the culture present in the society. All the issues mentioned above relate to the social roles assumed by individuals, such as marrying, having children or obtaining retirement. It is in the sociocultural age that space is opened to certain stereotypes that are present in old age (Fonseca, 2006).

The psychological age refers to the behaviours that the subject may have, taking into account the environment in which he or she lives. The psychological age encompasses factors such as memory, intelligence and entrepreneurial capacity. When these factors are maintained, they allow an increase in self-esteem and the maintenance of a high level of autonomy and control by the individual (Fontaine, 2000).

According to Fontaine (2000), ageing is not a state, but a process of deterioration that is increasing. As time goes by, this process becomes more painful. On the other hand, this process of deterioration is different in each individual.

Ageing can be seen as a concept that is developed in relation to society, supported on a social basis and in a given historical context. In the past, older people were important, respected and seen as holders of wisdom. This wisdom was based on life experience. However, with the evolution of time, in some countries, this logic has been changed and this wisdom has been devalued (Romans, Petrus & Trilla, 2003).

Old age is a social construct related to the social reality of the old people (Romans et. al., 2003; Veloso, 2009). In several countries old age can be considered as the state or identity of groups of people over 65 years of age (Fontaine, 2000). The concept of old age has evolved over time. From the 1970s onwards, this concept of old age changes from invisible to identified old age (Veloso, 2002). Invisible old age was understood as a domestic responsibility. Individuals were no longer able to work and were treated at home by their relatives. With the introduction of pension systems for this age group, old age is no longer represented by incapacity to work, but is associated with retirement. Moreover, retirement, as a public policy for all individuals, gives an identity to this group and old age is identified.

From then on, old age begins to be seen as a social problem. This transformation of old age into a social problem must be seen from various angles: from the demographic increase, but also from the very functioning of the society in which the old adults are inserted.

The proportion of people over 65 is increasing (INE, 2013). The rapid increase of ageing is the result of factors such as the low birth rate and the increase in migration, which leads to a marked fall in the number of young people. Thus, the ageing of the population is accentuated, taking into account the low fertility and mortality rates resulting from the evolution of medicine (Romans et al., 2003).

Due to what was stated above, nowadays, age seems to represent one of the most evident forms of discrimination and social exclusion (Barros, 2008). There seems to be an idea that at 65 years of age, older adults do not make any contribution to the community and that they only benefit their services. For this reason, currently being 65/67 years old means for many to be outdated, obsolete, i.e. the elderly adult who is in a retirement situation is no longer considered productive for society and is revalued (Fernandes, 1997).

Nowadays, the age group of old adults is integrated into a social category that consists of ideas such as disability, illness, poverty, loneliness, need for help, support and public solidarity (Fernandes, 1997). On the other hand, older people are often seen as fragile individuals. In

addition, the image of the older is usually associated with disengagement, passivity, degradation and marginalisation (Romans et al., 2003).

According to Fontaine (2000), ageing is not a state, but a process of deterioration that is increasing. As time goes by, this process becomes more painful. On the other hand, this process of deterioration is different in each individual and can be worsens if the individual suffers some kind of age-related illness.

It is also life in society and social relations that can enable older people and everyone to sustain values such as companionship, solidarity, competitiveness or mutual respect (Romans et al., 2003). The social relations and the ideas that society transmit can be non-favourable to the older people.

Retirement can be considered as entry into old age and, as such, has an associated negative charge that is often reflected in the individual's self-esteem (Fonseca, 2006). The transition to retirement and the way it is experienced by individuals differs from person to person, taking into account the situation and the way in which this stage of life is perceived. In its most radical and negative perspective, retirement can be considered a form of social death, as individuals feel socially useless and are left out in many situations (Fontaine, 2000).

One of the major problems is that, taking into account the preconceived ideas about older adults, there is from the outset a mistrust on the part of younger individuals and an attitude of apathy and resignation towards them. This attitude prevents the participation and experience of older adults in initiatives that could be important for their maintenance of activity and social involvement. In short, the way to avoid stereotypes is to look at old adult as the person who is, with rights and obligations, with joy and anxiety, with ambitions and disappointments (Fonseca, 2006).

2.2. Third age

First age refers to childhood and second age refers to adulthood. The concept of third age is a relatively recent term and replaces that of old age. The concept of third age appears with the assumption of removing the negative connotation of ageing (Veloso, 2009). This concept is related to the increase in the average life expectancy and to the retirement seen as a social right of the individual.

The older are often seen as a homogeneous group in which the criterion that defines them is their age (World Health Organization, 2005; Barros, 2008). However, it is now important to bear in mind that these individuals are in fact an important resource for the structure of our

societies (World Health Organization, 2005). These individuals, taking into account their life experience, can play several important roles.

Veloso states that old age can be seen and lived from two perspectives: traditional passive old age or active old age (Veloso, 2011). This distinction in the experience of old age is related to the attitude of older adults towards their participation in educational and cultural life. This distinction is based on the need for older adults to feel socially and culturally inserted and active (Veloso, 2011). While traditional passive old age is associated with the initial concept of old age, unproductive older people and weights for society, active old age refers to older adults who are participatory in cultural life and inserted in social and cultural life (Veloso, 2009). These adults are those who seek to keep themselves updated and involved in different social areas, producers and consumers of knowledge, and who seek education as a continuous process that occurs throughout their lives.

Having in consideration the increasing of the number of older people and taking into account the perspectives presented above, there are two central points: it is important that people remain independent and active meanwhile they age. It is also important to bear in mind the role older people play in their contexts and in the community, namely through their participation in society (World Health Organization, 2005).

Several authors (Jacob, 2005; Formosa, 2011) consider that education, as a continuous process, is essential. There is now a widespread awareness of the importance of education and learning and their suitability for ageing. On the other hand, it is essential to promote the physical, mental and social well-being of older people that education can provide. All these factors have been reinforcing the need to promote the education of older adults, in order to promote practices that can respond to the needs and problems of individuals.

Recent studies suggest that individuals over the age of 65 can learn if the content is clearly presented and if it is appealing and motivating. Some research also shows that older adults should be seen as a community resource with assigned roles and functions (Withnall & Kabwasa, 1989).

It should be borne in mind that, given the characteristics of this age group, educational needs are varied. At this point, old adults must have flexible and varied programs to meet their needs (Kennedy, 1989). On the other hand, education for older adults can be understood as an instrument of learning acquisition and social promotion, since it is central to the maintenance of individuals' cognitive capacities (Fonseca, 2006). Moreover, the educational factors combined with the need for social inclusion of individuals lead to the relevance of public policies for this age group.

Therefore, taking into account the above, rather than developing formal learning processes (linked to ways of working that are more characteristic of traditional schools), it is important to focus the education of older adults on the participation and well-being of individuals, developing non-formal learning dynamics that are based on reflection and critical thinking. Freire (1967) argued that education allows adults to live and follow a world that is constantly changing, as mentioned by Formosa (2011), not only as a spectator but also as an active and intervening subject.

Freire also defended the development of the notion of praxis to establish a critical education that would lead people to have greater control over their knowledge and their thinking (1967). This education, according to the same author, included concepts such as emancipation, empowerment, transformation, awareness and social control (Formosa, 2011).

3- Discovering social needs

3.1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The needs of the individuals are usually taken as a starting point to their motivation. If we consider the motivation theory, it is connected to the psychological drives. Maslow in is works tried to understand the motivations of individuals. He believed that individuals possess a set of motivation systems unrelated to incentives or unconscious desires. In this sense we believed that people are motivated to achieved certain personal needs. In is logic a second need can be satisfied just after the first one. In this sense, Maslow created a pyramid named "hierarchy of needs" that includes five motivational needs divided by levels (Maslow, 1954; Wlodkowski, 2008).
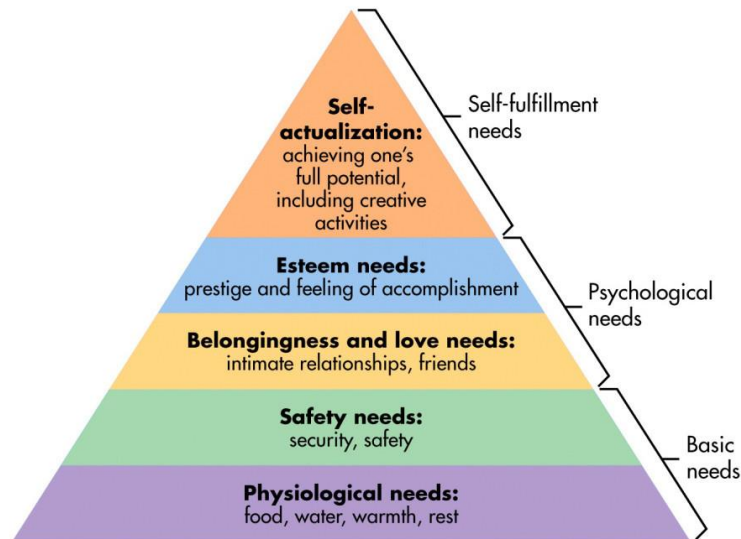
Figure 3: Pyramid of Maslow

As we can see by the figure, the five levels of the pyramid can be divided into basic (or deficiency) needs, such as the physiological needs and safety needs; psychological , such as belongingness and love needs and esteem needs and self-fulfilment needs, actualization needs (growth needs) (Maslow, 1985). Following we are going to explain each of these levels:

The *physiological needs* are usually taken as the starting point for the motivational theory, also called as physiological drives. These are considered the primary needs and are connected with the primary needs, physiologic needs such as food, water and rest (Luppi, 2015).

The *safety needs* are the second level. Is the physiological needs are relatively well satisfied, then emerges this second set of needs, which Maslow categorized as *safety needs*. This set regards the need of "protection, tranquillity, not to be afraid, to be able to consider the external environment as a reasonably predictable and organized reality, to feel safe in their own context of life" (Luppi, 2015, p. 38).

The *belongingness and love needs* are the new set and start a new cycle. Here we pass from basic needs to psychological needs. Now the person feels the absence or presence of friends. So, this set regards the need for belonging and affection. At this level, of psychological needs, the individuals have the desire to give and receive affection, to feel accepted in one's own social context of reference, to belong to a group, and to avoid isolation and abandonment (Luppi, 2015).

The *esteem needs* are related with the need or the desire of individuals for a stable, firmly based (based upon capacity achievement and respect by others), high evaluation of themselves, for self-respect or self-esteem, and for the esteem of others (Luppi, 2015). Satisfaction of the self esteem need leads to feelings of self-confidence, worth, strength, capacity and adequacy of being useful and necessary in the world.

For last, the *self-actualization* set regards the last level of the pyramid and is related to individual's self-fulfilment. With all the previous levels achieved, individuals are able to achieve full potential, developed activities that concern creativity, creation and actualization. This set is different for each individual because each person have their own experiences and personal desires.

This representation of needs of Maslow is an important starting point to reflect on services and responses to the third age in our days. It could be interesting to analyse the reality of the old people, having in consideration their needs, their desires and if there are contexts responding to it.

4. Adult Education: contributions from international organisations

As we begin the theme of Adult Education (AE) and before we even define this concept, we consider it pertinent to make a brief historical approach to this field of practice and reflection. It is possible to mention that the expansion of Adult Education in Europe occurs after 1945, due in large part to the impulse attributed by international organisations. With the end of the Second World War, there is a need to establish several international organizations with different objectives. One of the organizations created was the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). This organization, founded in November 1945, aims to preserve the peace, intellectual and moral solidarity of all humanity (UNESCO, n.d.).
UNESCO has promoted studies, reflections and proposals for new methodologies of intervention in adult education (Cavaco, 2008). It was also responsible for organizing various events "which involved the participation of representatives of the member states and aimed to define international education policies and influence the content of national policies" (Lima & Guimarães, 2011, p. 113). UNESCO pursued to influence the promotion of innovative public policies that highlighted the various directions for lifelong education (training and learning) (Cavaco, 2008; Guimarães, 2009). Moreover, UNESCO's proposal is based on "social justice,

equal opportunities and democracy, including an integrated and global policy", and assumes the need for a public policy that promotes lifelong education.

One of UNESCO's most significant contributions to adult education was the definition of permanent education, which is carried out in various documents, such as the Faure Report (Faure, 1972) and the International Conferences on Adult Education.

Faure Report

At the beginning of 1970, a period that is marked by transformations and scientific and technological progress, the Faure Report was considered an important milestone in educational thinking (Faure, 1972). This Report refers to important issues such as the relevance of educational technologies, the concept of permanent education and educational cities. According to the Faure Report:

> education is no longer defined in relation to a specific content that it is a matter of assimilating, but is actually conceived as a process of a human being that, through the diversity of its experiences, the man learns to express itself, to communicate, to question the world and to become ever more itself. The idea that man is an unfinished being and can only be realized at the worth of constant learning has solid foundations (...) Therefore, education takes place at all ages of life and in the multiplicity of situations and circumstances of existence. It takes up the true nature of being global and permanent, and goes beyond the limits of the institutions, programmes and methods that have been imposed on it over the centuries. (Faure, 1972, p. 225)

Thus, according to the Faure Report, the concept of Permanent Education (PE) covers the entire educational process. PE can be understood as a process that occurs throughout the individual's life, that interrelates the individual and social dimensions of education, and that takes into account a humanist system of collective values (Lengrand, 1970). The PE also integrates the personal, social and political dimensions of the individual and seeks to maintain equality and the right to learn for all. In this way of thinking, education is seen as a human, basic and social right (Lima, 2007; Pavan, 2008; UNESCO, 2010) and a collective good (UNESCO, 1999), which is based on the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948 - Article 21). The growth of social complexity has led to an increase in the demand for knowledge throughout life.

Finger and Asún (2003) state that with the emergence of this political project occurs the "federating moment of adult education". According to the authors, the permanent education project

> provided a coherent discourse on adult education, with which both trainers and learners from both North and South could be identified. In addition, permanent education gave adult education a political identity - and, more importantly, an international and institutional identity - while making it part of a global humanizing movement. There is no memory of such a moment in the history of adult education. (p.31)

With the permanent education movement, UNESCO adopts a discourse of "humanization of development". It argues that the objective of adult education should be to contribute to the promotion of an active intervention of individuals in the development process. That is, individuals should participate as subjects and not as objects in their development (Finger & Asún, 2003, p. 31).

According to the concept of the PE, the educational process is centred on the person as "subject of training and is based on three main assumptions: continuity of the educational process, diversity and globality" (Canário, 1999, p. 88). According to these characteristics, the educational process results from the combination of several factors such as the level of education and the relationship between individuals and contact with the world.

Several theorists contributed to the philosophical and pedagogical foundations of the permanent education movement. One of the main ones was Lengrand, which played an important role in UNESCO and in the dissemination and argumentation of the educational project (Cavaco, 2008). Lengrand (1970) defends the contributions of adult education in the emergence of reflections and principles to permanent education, taking into account a perspective of coherence and continuity. These reflections were important to clarify and reinforce the importance of adult education and to define policies in this sector, within a logic of integration, continuity and complementarity (Canário, 1999; Cavaco, 2008).

Finger and Asún (2003) also refer that the conception of PE integrates the personal, social, economic and political development of the individual. At the heart of the idea of PE is the search for equality and the realisation of the right to learn that is for all and that covers all life. This idea integrates the vision of education as a "global project aimed not only at developing the education system", breaking with aspects of the school model (Magalhães, 1996, p. 89).

In the PE, there is a "strong criticism of the school" (Lima & Guimarães, 2011, p. 115), of education as an exclusive property of the school and of the educational policies promoted until

then focused on this organisation. In this critique, lies the need to define new policies, which becomes more evident when it is found that school education is ineffective and inefficient and that it does not meet all educational needs (Canário, 1999). According to Guimarães (2009), this concept questions the notions of school success and failure and presupposes a new conception of the individual. This new conception aims at the total development of the subject. For Lengrand (1970, p. 47), adult education presents a parallel path to traditional education and, therefore, it presents "a considerable prosperity, not only in terms of the formation and instruction of adults, but also for the whole of the educational action". According to this author, the PE is the instrument and the necessary condition of the whole society that wants to be focused on progress and the future. This author also argues that education needs to leave the context of the school and occupy other contexts. It can also be present in a variety of activities ranging from playful to work-related activities of individuals.

According to Lima (2002), the PE aims to educate "for participation and democratic citizenship, for development and transformation, for the clarification and autonomy of citizens". Following this logic, several authors consider that the practices developed seem to be driven by and for individuals, at the same time that they have a strong influence from the cultural sphere and the community itself (Canário, 1999; Lima, 2002).

PE, not being a pedagogy, can be seen as a political and institutional project that defends some kind of social change (Finger & Asún, 2003).

Despite the scope of the concept, the PE focuses on a more personal dimension and leaves aside the issue of training and professional qualification. Taking into account the new challenges of the economy and the labour market, in the mid-1980s the PE started to be seen as an insufficient and/or incomplete design, taking into account the needs of education (Melo, Lima & Almeida, 2002).

4.1. International Adult Education Conferences

In recent years, several authors have addressed the role of international organizations in the definition of adult education (Canário, 1999; Pavan 2005; Pavan 2008). From our analyses, the UNESCO International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA) seems to have a relevant role in the implementation of adult education measures in national terms. The International Conferences on Adult Education (CONFINTEAS) came to contribute to the social visibility of this domain and foster its valorisation as an educational sector (Cavaco, 2008).

From the Conferences held and the analysis of the documents that have emerged it is possible to confirm that "adult education has deserved special attention from UNESCO since its creation" (Finger & Asún, 2003, p. 30). On the other hand, the guidelines issued by these International Conferences have been affirming themselves as fundamental axes of the national policies of the various countries that are members of the organisation (Cavaco, 2008), and have contributed to the development of this field.

From the documents it can be seen that, despite the efforts and the work developed, there is still a gap regarding public policies and the attention that has been given to adult education for the older adult's generation in UNESCO's action.

By analysing the documents issued by this organisation, it is possible to observe an evolution in terms of the proposals for the field of adult education. It is possible to verify that in the first four Conferences literacy is presented as the priority area of intervention, given the high rate of illiteracy in the various age groups. However, it does not seem to have been given relevance directly to the education of older people.

Based on the analysis of the work carried out in the first four CONFINTEA, it is also possible to verify the evolution of the concept of literacy itself. Initially, the concern was literal literacy. However, in the following Conferences, the priority was no longer literal literacy (in so-called developing countries), but functional literacy. Thus, with the passage of time, the concern is no longer focused on the "illiterate" - "adults who do not dominate the reading, writing and calculation", but on the "illiterate" - "adults who do not dominate the fundamental skills to participate in economic and social evolution" (Cavaco, 2008, p. 54).

In the IV CONFINTEA, in 1985, for the first time no reference is made to strategies to combat illiteracy. Instead, was referred the need to find post-literacy measures, in order to avoid that the "neo-literate regress in their knowledge and return to a situation of illiteracy", while at the same time ensuring access to other educational opportunities with a view to continuing education (Cavaco, 2008, p. 65). In this Conference there are two new progresses relative to the aged. In first place, the older adults are no longer part of "the group of the disadvantaged and become part of the group of people with particular educational needs"; In the second place, begun "the recognition of the right to education on the part of all people", including the old adults (Veloso, 2011, p. 140).

It is with the V CONFINTEA that AE gains greater visibility worldwide. In addition, the diversity of the field and practices of adult learning is explored. Despite this diversity being advocated, the approach seems to be increasingly oriented towards human resource management (Cavaco, 2008).

It was in 1990 that UNESCO stopped using the concept of PE, to use the expression of Lifelong Learning (LLL). With the economic concerns and educational needs linked to the labour market, the LLL started to gain ground and high visibility both in official documents and in International AE Conferences.

These concepts, namely PE and LLL form a different view of man and education, reveal breakthroughs at the ideological level and defend different perspectives (Cavaco, 2008).

Regarding the role and intervention of the State in adult education, UNESCO advocated variations in this intervention in the various Conferences (Lima, 2007). In the first four Conferences, the State recognises the richness and diversity of initiatives in the field of adult education. In this domain, the State has responsibilities at the level of policy definition, planning, coordination and financing of adult education. On the other hand, it is argued that policies should be developed in a perspective of independence and decentralisation. Adult education thus emerges as a strategic domain for the development of the country (Cavaco, 2008).

The V Conference marks a break with the previous educational discourse and an evolution in political discourse. The Hamburg Declaration and the Agenda for the Future and Monitoring Report are the documents that result from this Conference (UNESCO, 1999). These texts highlight the change in concepts, guidelines and practices, since "the various documents reveal the search for new forms and modalities of planning, incentive and support for the emergence and implementation of responses, within a logic of shared responsibility" (Lima, 2007, p. 35). Regarding the concepts used, the concept of PE, used in the first conferences, is replaced by the concept of LLL; another of the changes has to do with the fact that we no longer speak only of adult education, but of adult education and training. Finally, the concepts of learning and knowledge (used in the reports so far) are replaced by the concept of competence (Cavaco, 2008). The modification of these concepts is evident and pertinent, in the sense that it is "an indispensable condition to face a rapidly changing world" (UNESCO, 1999, p. 18).

This Conference also invokes the great political, economic and social transformations of recent times and presents the need to think about the education of individuals from a different perspective (Canário, 1999). This new perspective presented in the speech of the V Conference seeks to respond to the importance of adjusting adult education to the needs of modern society (Cavaco, 2008).

As already mentioned, the Hamburg Declaration was formulated at this Conference. This Declaration played an important role in several aspects, among them the redefinition of the

concept of adult education itself. With the Hamburg Declaration, adult education is no longer seen only as a right of the individual but is seen as a right and a duty.

This conference stated that basic education for all "is not only a right, but also a duty and responsibility towards others and society" (UNESCO, 1999, p. 21).

According to the Hamburg Declaration, adult education is a process that is

> The aim of this initiative is to promote the development of formal and informal learning environments in which people considered "adults" by society develop their skills, enrich their knowledge and improve their technical and professional qualifications, directing them towards satisfying their needs and those of their society. (UNESCO, 1999, pp. 19-20)

The speech at the V Conference shows us that individual responsibility and autonomy are centred on the individual, in the sense of making him/her responsible for the search for education and the resolution of his/her problems and society. According to this logic, it is essential that "individuals and communities be able to grasp their own destiny and that of society in order to face the challenges of the future" (UNESCO, 1999, p. 20).

Thus, according to the Hamburg Declaration, the objectives of youth and adult education as long-term processes aim at developing the autonomy and responsibility of individuals and strengthening the capacity to cope with the transformations that occur in the economy and society. In addition, adult education promotes the coexistence, tolerance and creative and critical participation of citizens in their communities, thus enable people to control their destinies and to face the challenges presented (UNESCO, 1999).

In this Declaration "approaches to adult education should be based on the common cultural heritage, values and previous experiences of each community" (UNESCO, 1999, p. 21), while at the same time fostering an active attitude of citizens in their communities.

In the V CONFINTEA it was concluded that from the AE process, the adult can model his identity as a citizen and give meaning to his life. If we take in consideration education that occurs throughout life, we encompass the context and the underlying factors, such as individuals, their ages and their learning needs. Thus, as adults get older, they need to have defined their identity and look for social roles that allow them to give new meanings to their lives.

Finally, although this CONFINTEA focuses on the educational issue of young people and adults, reference is made to the various vulnerable groups in society that deserve special

attention. Among the groups mentioned in the Hamburg Declaration is the group of older people.

It is also at this Conference that special attention is paid to the increase in the number of older people and the demographic situation in Europe. Of the many documents drawn up in the field of adult learning, this was the Conference that showed a more direct concern with the issue of these individuals.

In particular, the need to recognise the capacities and skills of older adults was highlighted, looking at the contributions that these individuals can make to society: "these older adults have much to offer for the development of society" and, therefore, "it is important that they have the same opportunity to learn as younger people" (UNESCO, 1999). This statement says that it is necessary to promote learning conditions and opportunities so that these individuals can be in touch with educational practices and participate in society. According to this logic and from Veloso perspective (2011), the participation of older people in education sought to ensure the participation of older adults in various educational activities, but principally in society, as citizens. Thus, education is not limited to the needs of recovery or mental maintenance but is seen as a right of individuals.

At the last Conference, held in Belem, the "great challenge [proposed, was] to move from rhetoric to action, sending efforts so that the recommendations presented in the Belem Framework for Action are implemented in public policies for the education of youth and adults. With this Conference it was intended to facilitate access to "quality education and learning processes for young people and adults and the strengthening of the right to lifelong education for all". The understanding of the diverse and integrated nature of education and learning for young people and adults was also highlighted, "the social relevance of formal, non-formal and informal processes and their fundamental contribution to the sustainable future of the planet" (UNESCO, 2010, pp. 3-4).

In the Belém Framework for Action, no relevance is given to the issue of old adults. The only (indirect) reference that we can find is in the point Participation, inclusion and equity in which it refers that

> There can be no exclusion due to age, gender, ethnicity, immigrant status, language, religion, disability, rurality, identity or sexual orientation, poverty, displacement or imprisonment. It is particularly important to combat the cumulative effect of multiple deprivation. Measures should be taken to increase motivation and access for all. (UNESCO, 2010, p. 11)

Despite the fact that the educational needs of older adults are recognised, there has been no move from declarations of intent to the definition of concrete policies (Veloso, 2011). On the contrary, in the most recent documents, such as the Belém Framework for Action, there seems to be a tendency to generalize educational issues, instead of creating measures for the various specific groups, as is the case of older adults.

4.2. Other UNESCO contributions

UNESCO's most recent documents also refer to the evolution and transition from an information society to a knowledge society. This passage deserves our attention, since it states that a knowledge society should be integrative of all its members, promoting new forms of solidarity, involving present and future generations (UNESCO, 2005). Although the knowledge society gives primacy to young groups, it is possible to identify a reference to older people and the importance of experience and wisdom acquired throughout life (UNESCO, 2005).

Also, the Delors' Report (1997) to UNESCO emphasised that in the face of 21st Century challenges, education plays an essential role:

> Education is at the heart of both personal and community development; its mission is to enable each of us, without exception, to develop all our talents to the full and to realize our creative potential, including responsibility for our own lives and achievement of our personal aims. (Delors, 1997, p.19)

The UNESCO Report on Education for the 21st Century is a valuable resource that can help to achieve ideals of peace, freedom and social justice. Education has a fundamental role in social and personal development: for this reason, it requires to be treated in a transversal way also in the political field (Delors' Report, 1997). This is the intuition on which the famous four pillars of education - learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be - are based.

The first pillar is "learning to know": the objective is the acquisition of a cultural background that allows the individual to be an active citizen and that arouses in him the interest in knowledge, leading him to a lifelong learning. According to the UNESCO Commission, the knowledge society, which is constantly changing and evolving, requires a training course that provides a solid basic education, which will have to be accompanied by the development of specific themes.

The second pillar is "learning to do", understood as the development of skills that can respond positively even to unpredictable situations. The objective is the acquisition of human skills and qualities that allow the individual to: better face the challenges of life, work adequately especially in groups and be able to act creatively in their own environment, making themselves available to the community and cooperating for the benefit of the common good.

The third pillar is "learning to live together" in harmony and peace: the goal is to be able to understand others and collaborate with them in all human activities. This requires the discovery of his self and others, and the identification of common objectives for overcoming the challenges posed by the differences. Therefore, to learn to live with others, one must develop an understanding of their history, their traditions and their spiritual values and create a new spirit, that enable people to carry out joint projects and to deal with conflicts in a responsible and peaceful manner.

The fourth pillar is "learning to be": learning is understood here as a tool that aims to identify and develop all the talents of each individual. In other words, education must allow the subject to fully realize his or her own personality, providing the necessary tools to develop critical thinking, creativity and autonomy of judgment. The focus is therefore both on the person as an individual and on his or her role in society: in fact, emerging talents contribute to the growth of the person, but take on even greater meaning and value if placed at the service of the community.

Furthermore, these items are fundamental to communication and the dissemination of information in our society, and they are so widely applicable that they include all people from children to older adults.

With regard to older adults, the issue of learning, is not solely about reflections on lifelong learning but also about what the UN has devoted to the broader theme of a society for all ages. The first World Assembly on Ageing, held in Vienna in 1982, approved an International Plan of Action on Ageing (United Nations, 1983), which represents a milestone that is also related to subsequent documents, starting with the proclamation of the year of older persons in 1999 and the second World Assembly on Ageing (United Nations, 2002). In all of these documents, a great deal of attention is paid to possible actions concerning the education of older adults, emphasising objectives such as self-realisation and participation in social life. The fourth area of attention of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing is dedicated to accessing knowledge, education, and training. This issue highlights as a specific objective the 'full utilization of the potential and expertise of persons of all ages' (United Nations, p. 16).

4.3. Contributions of the European Union to the field of adult learning

The European Union (EU), created in 1957, defines itself as an "economic and political partnership of unique characteristics". Its objectives are "to encourage economic cooperation in Europe, (...) to promote human rights both on its territory and in the rest of the world (...) to develop the single market so that Europeans can make the most of its enormous potential" (European Union, 2012).

Like UNESCO, the European Union (EU) has also played an active role in developing the field of adult learning. Lima and Guimarães (2011) state that the EU has shown an increasing interest in education, including adult learning, even though these are not central to its agenda.

Despite the fact that the EU does not have objectives exclusively focused on adult education, in recent years there has been an appropriation of the concept of lifelong learning.

The role of the EU has not always been the same, but taking into account the educational needs inherent to the labour market, the role of the EU has intensified when terms such as skills, qualifications, recognition and validation of achievements, productivity and competitiveness start to be used (Lima & Guimarães, 2011).

In this sense, the lifelong learning discourse, as defined by the European Commission (2000), takes into account the need for lifelong learning of the individual to ensure employability, social inclusion, competitiveness and economic development.

The Memorandum on Lifelong Learning (2000) was adopted by the European Commission in the year 2000 and focuses on individual responsibility, and on learning which is the duty of citizens. This document "responds to the mandate of the Lisbon and Feira European Councils to give a practical dimension to lifelong learning" (Commission of the European Communities, 2000, p. 3).

In this text, the EU refers to the European Employment Strategy and defines "lifelong learning as any learning activity, with an aim, undertaken on a continuous basis and aimed at improving knowledge, skills and competences". Indeed, it assumes that "lifelong learning is no longer just a component of education and training, but should become the guiding principle of provision and participation in a learning continuum, whatever the context" (Commission of the European Communities, 2000, p. 3).

This discourse addresses the issue of active citizenship by considering that "to fully develop this capacity, people must want and be able to take control of their own lives" (European Commission, 2000, p. 8). It is argued that individuals should be informed about the formative offer and trigger the search for what interests them most, they should be motivated to learn and

be able to manage their own learning. Thus, learning becomes seen as a responsibility that each one assumes and is responsible, within the logic of self-management (Cavaco, 2008). The European Union argues that 'lifelong learning is an issue that affects the future of all in a completely individualised way' (European Commission, 2000, p.3).

According to Lima and Guimarães (2011), the new requirements involve new roles for adult learning and "it is up to each individual to renew knowledge and skills throughout life" (p.128). The need to increase competitiveness, productivity, employability and adaptability to the new demands of the labour market replaces the concerns of the humanist discourse of integral human development in the EP with a technocratic and mercantilist discourse.

According to the Commission of European Units (CUE, 2000), the two main objectives of the LLL are "to promote active citizenship and foster employability" (p. 6). In this sense, LLL can go through all learning activities with the aim of increasing knowledge, skills and competences of individuals (Biesta, 2006).

According to this author, the LLL has three dimensions: economic, personal and democratic.

-Economic dimension: refers to the acquisition of skills that are indispensable for employability, financial well-being and the economy.

-Personal dimension: it is linked to learning that provides personal fulfilment and development. It concerns learning through lifelong learning and the ability to make use of it.

-Democratic dimension: it is linked to social justice and the emancipation of individuals so that they are able to live their lives in community.

The European Commission documents also highlight the importance of partnerships and of changing the role of the state. An attempt is being made to hold civil society accountable for initiatives that were previously the responsibility of the state. The commitment to partnerships and the accountability of civil society are the result of "market pressure for privatisation, as adult education is no longer the responsibility of public administration but of private entities" (Finger & Asún, 2003, p. 111).

This is a process considered inevitable, taking into account that "the subordination of education to the mercantile logic induces education itself to organise itself by adopting the economic rationality of the market" (Canário, 1999, p. 90). That is, learning is used as a source of trade and it is "sold worldwide like any other commodity" (Finger & Asún, 2003, p. 13). In this line of thinking, the European Union speaks of an education and training market, taking into account a mercantilist perspective. According to this perspective, "information on the suppliers and economic aspects of education/training, on costs and on the availability of supply needs to be collected" (European Commission, 2000, p. 37).

There are several authors who criticize this idea of the commodification of education, because

adult learning has become just one of many offers in society's 'cultural market', which means

that it is increasingly subject to the pressures of competition, supply and demand conditions and

commercialisation. For this reason, adult education is also being exploited. (Finger & Asún,

2003, p. 111-112)

Also, according to Canário (2003), the LLL can be seen as a conception that removes from education "the dream, the utopia and the project", that is, it loses the sense of the individual while being responsible for knowing and transforming the world (Canário, 2003, p. 205). Education ceases to be a driving force that leads to the transformation of society (Finger & Asún, 2003).

The discourse is made taking into account the global population, "all Europeans should, without exception, benefit from identical opportunities to adapt to the demands of social and economic change and actively participate in building the future of Europe" (European Commission, 2000, p. 3). Based on this assumption, "the most disadvantaged and least educated individuals are also those who least seek and benefit from learning opportunities" (Melo, Lima & Almeida, 2002, p. 35).

With regard to the demographic changes represented by Europe ageing population and the lack of young people entering the labour market, the importance of tackling problems such as school drop-outs among young people and the lack of actions aimed at developing the skills of low-skilled adults is emphasised. According to the Commission of the European Communities (2006), adult learning has a role to play in the social inclusion of individuals, especially in the fight against social exclusion. Once again, however, the issue of education for older adults is not specifically addressed.

In short, the EU's approach is different from that of UNESCO. The analysis of the discourses present in this policy allows us to state that the EU seeks to instrumentalise education, thus giving it a reductive role. This reductive role leads to inequalities that are generated by public policies themselves. If we take into account that the main purpose of the LLL is the promotion of skills for professional integration (Cavaco, 2012), this logic ends up not targeting education for all, which has a decisive influence on the participation of older adults in educational practices.

In this sense, there are two main obstacles in terms of the participation of older adults in educational processes. Firstly, older people are not included in the priority framework of education policies. On the other hand, older adults themselves do not give any meaning to

education and training policies that follow this logic because the aims of the logic differ from theirs.

5. Adults participation and learning

Empirical data show that participation in adult learning activities varies according to demographic, socioeconomic, and cultural factors (cf. Bélanger, 2011). Italy and Portugal are both Romanic and Mediterranean countries. These countries have some similarities and differences in their policies and practices, many of them related with the historical and the political context.

Some data of the adult learning in Portugal and Italy

Portugal is a small country, situated in the extreme southwest of Europe, has an estimated population of 10.4 million (Eurostat, 2015). Statistics show that out of the people inhabiting Portugal, the ones aged 65 or more years old are about 2 millions, representing 19 percent of total population. In the last decade, the number of older citizens has increased about 19 percent. Among the old adults, the age group that has witnessed a drastic increase is 80-plus cohort.

The education system in Portugal is mostly regulated by the government, and the principal responsible authority is the Ministry of Education and Science. Traditional universities and non-governmental institutions are the main institutions responsible for adult education in Portugal. In the past decade, the government introduced some policies and programmes related to adult education, with a focus on education and learning for young (active) adults to improve their background and qualification.

For example, according with Adult Education Survey (AES) of the National Statistics Institute (INE) in 2007, Portugal was one of the EU's 27 countries with the lowest level of participation in lifelong learning activities although it has been increasing in recent years. This result clearly shows the effort that the country has developed in recent years in improving the educational qualifications on adult population. From 2007 to 2011 the increasing participation of adults in lifelong learning activities has contributed to a considerable improvement of Portugal's ranking in the European context. Portugal´s proportion of participants in lifelong learning went from 8.5 percent below the EU average (27 countries) in 2007 to 3.6 percent above the European average. For this improvement in the country's positioning, contributed mainly, the participation increases in non-formal education activities' (INE, 2013, p. 20).

Regarding the motivations for the participation, the motivation for participate in formal activities was "getting a certificate or a diploma"; the motivations for participate in non-formal activities was "professional", besides that, almost all of those activities occurred during the working hours (cf. INE 2013).

Concerning the AES is possible to see who is participating and who is not. Non-participation in education, training and learning was particularly high among (cf. INE 2013): older age groups (40 percent for the age group 55 to 64 years, compared to 7 percent for the age group 18 to 24 years); less qualified (64 percent for those who had no education level, compared with 5 percent for those who had tertiary education); with equally low skilled parents (following a trend like that observed for one's own education level); with non-existent or irregular reading habits. According with AES (2011–12) the mentioned obstacles to people's participation in lifelong learning activities were: 'other personal reasons' (24.4percentlack of time or interest, 'training takes place at a too distant place' (6.2 percent) Distance and the lack of nearby training opportunities seem to be an important reason for non-participation; and 'cost too high' (5.5 percent)—it doesn't seem to be accessible for all (Ricardo et al. 2016).

Italy is a European country with almost 61 million people (Eurostat, 2015), the fifth-most populated on the European continent. The Ministry of Education, University and Research, is the main institution managing adult education. It is supported by many national agencies and associations (highly structured system) helping to divide and better distribute the work (Ricardo et al. 2016). In term of adult education participation, Italy was in both years of the study- 2007 and 2011/2012- below the European average. Although if we compare the two surveys, the percentage of participants in adult education and training courses increased from 22.2 per cent (in 2006) to 35.6 per cent (in 2012) (ISTAT, 2013).

According to AES (2011–12) data, the age range of those who participate more in formal or non-formal education is 25–34 (43.0 percent). Those who participate less are aged 55–64 (22.3 percent). Focusing on formal education, the age range of those who participate more is 25–34 (9.7 percent); that of those who participate less is 45–54 (0.8 percent). Regarding non-formal education and training, the age rate of those who participate more is 35–44 (38.8 percent), that of those who participate less is 55–64 (22.3 percent) (cf. AES, 2011/12).

In Italy, there seem not to be a major difference between men and women concerning the reasons for participating in education and training activities (Ricardo et al. 2016). The most important reasons of participation are: to get a certificate (87.9 percent); to have more

knowledge and competences on topic of interest (87.0 percent); to have more options to find/change jobs (85.1 percent).

Furthermore, there is a clear distinction between women and men regarding the non-participation reasons. For woman the three main reasons are: 'conflict with family responsibilities' (44.3 percent), 'activities too expensive' (43.4 percent), and 'conflict with work responsibilities' (26.7 percent). For men the reasons are the same, but they have a different order. First, we find 'activities too expensive' (42.8 percent), then 'conflict with work responsibilities' (38.3percent), and 'conflict with family responsibilities' (31.0 percent) (cf. AES, 2011/12). This question can be related with the role of the gender and the responsibilities of the woman in the family.

Considering the previous data – Portugal and Italy- we can attest two main obstacles in both countries for the participation of the old adults: i) the old adults are not a priority of educational policies, they seem mainly directed to vocational training and labour market; ii) old adults do not assign a meaning to education and learning policies that follow European Union logic because their goals seem to be considerably different. Lifelong learning is a not usual activity among people aged 55 years and older: participation rates decrease in both countries when people turn 45 and further do so when they reach the age of 55 to 64. This may seem as a contradiction, since participation decreases precisely when people have more free time (Bélanger, 2011).

6. Defining Adult Education and learning

In attempting to define adult learning, it should be noted that it can have a variety of functions and respond to diverse needs. The need to comprehend education as being for adults is the result of a trend that leads to the progressive retardation of human maturity. For many years, childhood and youth have been considered the main stages of learning. That said, in a first phase, the characterization of the adult as an object of education focused on factual aspects, such as appearance, affectivity and intellectuality. Later, the adult is considered to have an ethical dimension and a perspective of personal fulfilment. Accordingly, the concept of AE evolves in the sense that a new meaning is given to the notion of adult (Melo, 1978).

According to a humanist perspective (personal valorisation), a group of individuals registers a definition that accentuates the specificity of AE. This definition replaces the focus of the AE of an object, to define it as an objective, and takes into account that the human being is an

unfinished being, which is in constant evolution. Having it in consideration, AE becomes a field with its own methods and contents, which is based on participation and which places participants as subjects of their own learning (Melo, 1978). It is the perception of incompleteness that moves human beings to desire training within a continuous perspective aimed at researching, defining and determining their own identity within the complex social network.

UNESCO (1976) defines adult learning as "a set of organized educational processes, regardless of content, level and method, whether formal or not" and which should not be considered an end in itself, but a subdivision and an integral part of a global scheme for education and lifelong learning (p.2). For Canário (1999), adult education is a "wider and uniform educational process which is intertwined with the individual's life process " (p. 11). Thus, education and lifelong learning, in a close sense of PE, emerge as concepts that denote "a general proposal aimed at restructuring the education system outside of school" in which the individual is the agent of their own education, through continuous interaction of their thoughts and actions; "the processes of education and learning in which individuals are involved in the course of their lives should be considered as a whole" (UNESCO, 2010, p. 14). Thus, lifelong learning and education primarily concern the integrity and dignity of adults' lives, taking into account their social diversity.

According to Belchior (1990), adult education can designate the totality of organised processes of education, regardless of content, level or method, whether they are more or less formalised and regardless of whether they replace or are an extension of the first (school) education.

It is through the various learning processes that people "develop skills, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications or give them a new orientation" (Belchior, 1990, p. 21). According to the author, adult learning enhances their attitudes and behaviour, both in terms of integral development and participation in social, economic and cultural development.

6.1. Political-educational models

Within the field of adult education there are several authors who have been concerned with defining and developing models that support the various situations experienced in adult education.

Licínio Lima (2008) points out three political-educational logics that have marked adult education in Portugal since 1974. These logics are distinct according to the political objective

and are defined as the democratic, emancipatory and autonomic logic, the logic of social control and the logic of modernisation of the economy and the production of work skills.

According to Lima (2008), educational policies suggest a historical continuum, since over the years there has been a shift from one logic to another, depending on the educational policies administered. In some cases these logics may coexist.

The first logic - a democratic, emancipatory and autonomous logic - is characteristic of popular education and emerges after the Democratic Revolution. This logic is visible in the initiatives promoted by the State between 1974 and 1976, and was developed through various projects and programmes. Popular education, which functions as the basis of these educational processes, is characterised by the decentralisation of politics, the autonomy of organisations and the work of civil society. The actions are carried out locally and are self-managed. In these areas, adult education actions are developed with a dynamic component that goes from the bottom up and suggests an articulation between civil society organizations and the State. Within this logic are developed actions and practices such as literacy, socio-cultural animation, basic education activities, among others. The initiatives developed within this logic are based on the creativity of the subjects and on collaborative processes, which aim at social transformation. On the other hand, this logic takes into account the traditions, the local culture and the life experience of individuals (Lima, 2008).

The second logic - the logic of social control - follows on from the imposition that is being made in terms of school guidelines and social modernisation. According to this logic, school education is the most valid; it underestimates the action developed by civil society and does not provide support for previously developed popular education. This logic favours the intervention of the State and highlights the schooling guidelines, the return to recurrent education and second chance, compensatory education. The schools promote courses and initiatives that are aimed at young people and adults. This logic led to the formalisation and schooling of adult education and the assumption was above all that the individual was capable of "reading, writing and counting" (Lima, 2008). This logic seems to contradict the first one and limits what adult education is, both in terms of educational instances, the work that is developed and the very consequences of this education in the lives of individuals.

Finally, the third logic -the logic of modernizing the economy and the production of labor skills - is the predominant logic today and concerns the "guidelines of the vocational type and the production of human capital. This logic arises from the need to respond to the challenges of the European Union and requires active integration policies aimed at "useful learning", the "acquisition of skills to compete", "lifelong qualification" and "education for employability".

Lima states that short-term measures are being sought that give relevance to "formatively rather than education, and individual responsibility rather than social responsibility" (Lima, 2008, p. 46). This logic encompasses initiatives aimed at qualification and somehow omits adult education as a reference concept.

The logics presented are dependent on several factors, such as economic and political ones, and the author states that the displacement that has occurred through the various logics has led to "fragmented and discontinuous" policies (Lima, 2008, p. 31). The author also argues that it is possible that several logics coexist at the same time and that there is the possibility of their articulation. If the articulation of the three logics happened, it was possible to achieve global and integrated adult education policies. From the moment that this domain was conjugated and articulated, it would be possible to find an answer to the heterogeneity and diversity of the field of AE and it would be possible to combine a series of diversity of approaches, methodologies, devices and publics, which in essence is what characterises adult education (Lima, 2008).

Looking at these logics and taking into account that they are based on educational policies, it is possible to observe that over time there is no concern with the need for concrete educational policies for older adults.

6.2. Models of adult education

In order to understand and analyse adult education and learning, Florentino Sanz Fernández (2006) has taken the concept of learning in a broad sense. Considering the different approaches to learning the author identified three distinct models of adult education: the receptive literacy model, the social dialogic model and the productive economic model. These models follow the educational purposes (presented previously) proposed by Lima.

These models dominated the educational work with adults during the 20th century and try to meet the learning needs of adults, taking into account their situations. The author explains these models based on different criteria, such as priorities, objectives and privileged methods of learning, the profile of the educator and the role of the learner. Although educational life and practices do not fit into concrete and limited models or categories, the models presented are important to stimulate reflection and analysis of the various practices carried out. According to the author, it should be seen "as tools to stimulate reflection and improve subsequent analyses and practices" (Sanz Fernández, 2006, p. 16). It also states that "the functioning of each model, on its own, tends to simplify the learning needs and possibilities of adults" (Sanz Fernández, 2008, p. 95). The aim is not to categorize the models into three separate areas, but to build an

interaction between the various criteria of the models in order to "understand the increasingly the complex phenomenon of adult education, training and learning" (Sanz Fernández, 2008, p. 95).

Receptive literacy model

The receptive literacy model is linked to the basic education that all individuals should achieve. It bases its intervention on filling gaps and "learning disabilities" and aims to "compensate, repair or treat more than intervene" (Sanz Fernández, 2008, p. 75).

This model gives priority to adult learning, the use of reading, writing and messaging codes. Taking into account the process and the objective, this model "gives primacy to teaching how to receive" and is "more dominant than liberating" (p. 75). In this sense, this model favours academic knowledge and its methods are based on mechanical practices of reading, message reception and knowledge. Only formal learning learned in classrooms is considered here and any previous experience is valued.

The educator emerges as a teacher, a specialist who teaches and holds the authority. The role of the learner is that of a student who learns, recites and repeats.

In conclusion this model is essentially based on the educational lack of the individual and not on their experiences or skills acquired from other contexts (Sanz Fernandez, 2006). The author also states that this model defines the effort of massification of education by the State.

Social dialogic model

The social dialogic model, values education for all in articulation with learning. According to the author this provides "the learning of skills that allow interaction, in a reflective and imaginative way, in the daily and structural life of society". For the author, education is a collective process in which the adult is the protagonist of learning.

The objectives are of a social nature (based on social needs) and learning begins in social relations.

The importance of everyone's involvement in the definition of what we want to learn is recognised, as well as the learning acquired throughout life. This model seeks to respond to present and future challenges through education and learning. It is based on flexibility with regard to time and space, but also with concerning the contents themselves (Sanz Fernández, 2006).

The privileged learning methods in this model are based on the dialogue, sharing and experience of life of individuals. This model is stimulating to motivate adults to new learning and knowledge; it foster new forms of participation and social integration. Furthermore, it link the individual dimension to the collective dimension of learning and education. This model can promote a quantity of characteristics' in individuals such as: interaction, reflection, imagination, creativity, value of reading, value of writing, improvement of critical awareness and free thinking, participation and social management of public affairs (Sanz Fernández, 2006).

The profile of the educator can be framed as an animator, facilitator, enhancer of learning and dialogue. The educator can be also seen as a motivator, a promoter of a critical attitude in adults, a supporter of adult experiences and of building new knowledge. On the other hand, the learner emerges as a protagonist of their own education and learning. The learner emerges as an active participant, manager of social action and committed to social change. These adults adopt an attitude of sharing among themselves, "In the learning space they come together, under equal conditions, what the teacher knows (due to their training), and what adult people know (due to their experience) enriching each other, enhancing participation and learning together" (Sanz Fernández, 2006, p. 61-62).

Productive economic model

Productive economic model concerns the development of skills related to the participation of the active population in the productive sector (Sanz Fernández, 2006). Contrary to the second model, it has a much more economic than a social purpose, and is linked to the concept of LLL, as the European Union advocates.

Based on the logic developed by this model, "the learning objectives are essentially economic, linked to labour organisations, and indirectly social. It should also be noted that given the state's inability to respond to all training needs, there is an increasing development of programmes by the market, which defines a trend towards the commoditisation of education. Here, social and dialogical skills are underestimated, and adult education actions are instrumentalised for the interests of social and economic groups (Guimarães, 2009, pp. 220-221).

The model has an economic and indirect character of a social nature. This model aims are: i) to acquire new basic skills (geared towards the labour market); ii) improve knowledge of a professional and specialized nature (increase productivity and competitiveness through

training); iii) improve the mastery of information and knowledge, promoting innovations in work contexts.

The methods of the model are based on continuing vocational training and the development of skills useful to the productive sector, the search for new professional knowledge of a specialised and specific nature.

The educator emerges as a human resource manager and apprentice promoter according to his or her economic profitability. On the other hand, the role of the learner is that of an adult protagonist of learning that is relevant from a professional point of view; of a worker in constant learning (mobilised to introduce innovations in the workplace that allow for increased productivity and competitiveness) (Sanz Fernández, 2006, p. 72-75).

Although Sanz Fernández distances himself from Lima by positioning his models in the educational dimensions and learning of individuals, the author states that it is possible and interesting to find an articulation and a complement between the various models presented, in order to respond to the amount of existing experiences and learning.

6.4. Adult Education Practices

As presented previously, some international organisations such as the UNESCO and UN have shown interest in alternative education and training issues. In 1990, a conference was held in Thailand that gave rise to two important documents for the promotion of these (alternative) methodologies: the "World Declaration on Education for All" and the "Plan of Action to meet basic learning needs". In these two documents a whole field of new educational possibilities is outlined (Gohn, 1998). Here, in addition to the learning needs and content addressed, "the values, attitudes to live and survive" are also covered (p. 513).

According to Canário (1999), the complexity of the concept of AE is affirmed in three main axes:

i) educational practices; ii) diversity of institutions; iii) figure of the educator.

With regard to educational practices (purposes, modes and publics), Canário (1999) points to four subsets that determine the territory of the social practices of AE:

i) Literacy which "corresponds to the development of a second chance educational offer addressed to adults" (p. 14);

ii) continuous vocational training: these processes are "oriented towards the accelerated qualification and requalification of the labour force, understood as prerequisites and indispensable to development of policy" (p. 14);

(iii) local development which is linked to the intervention processes and which links 'education and development' at local level. The participation of interested individuals is valued.

iv) socio-cultural animation: the educational character of the personal experiences of individuals in the various social contexts and of the dynamics carried out outside the school context is recognised.

Although they are distinct subsets and have their own objectives, adult education can encompass one of these subsets or all four simultaneously, depending on the objective. In addition to these sub-sets, in other works the same author has devoted particular attention to informal education, for example, in the context of the recognition of acquired experiences, as well as to social movements as dynamics of adult education (Canário, 2007).

The second axis of complexity of the field of educational practices, defended by Canário, concerns the diversity of institutions. The progress of adult education and the "recognition of the educational character of the experience lived in very different social contexts" which move away from the traditional context (school) contribute to the end of the "educational monopoly" of the school institution" (Canário, 1999, p. 16). Thus, educational practices are now recognised in various contexts that may be related to the employment, recreational activities or social intervention. Complementarily, there is a significant institutional diversity, "internal to the different poles that make up the field of adult education, allows for a dichotomous division between educational and non-educational institutions" (Canário, 1999, p. 17).

Finally, the third axis refers to social actors with direct and intervening intervention in educational processes, this is how the figure of the educator appears (Canário, 1999). The role of the adult educator is to be a driving force in the learning process (Melo, 2010, ¶12). The adult educator can be defined as a person who performs various tasks and has various functions. Their roles are based on technical, conceptual and affective competencies and can be exercised at the same time or independently. This educator can be a facilitator, a resource for learning, an expert, a planner, an instructor, a co-apprentice and a mentor (Torrado, 2002).

The roles of the adult educator can differ, depending on the philosophical positions and the commitments they make. Freire (1996) defended the idea of the critical adult educator. This author considered that a good adult educator should have characteristics such as the capacity for dialogue, horizontality, praxis, valuing learning, criticality and reflexivity. Furthermore, the author defended an interventive, active and political attitude and a constant commitment to change and transformation. According to Freire, the educator should be someone with training and skills that allow him/her to develop his/her work.

6.5. Trilogy in education: Formal, non-formal and informal education

The role of education is multiple. Educational needs emerge from various fields and seek to respond to diverse questions and objectives. According to Canário (1999), education is marked by the emergence of the concept of permanent education and makes the educational process seen as "a continuum that integrates and articulates different levels of formalization of educational action" (p. 80).

In order to better understand these levels of formalisation of content, methods, evaluation, and relationships established between the various actors, it is important to understand each level, taking into account the criteria in which they fit.

Having in consideration that education is a broad and comprehensive process, educational practices can be developed from different levels or modalities. Thus, a typology of the various modalities of education - formal, non-formal and informal education - emerges and can be based on various criteria such as context, intentionality, basic structure and characteristics.

Formal education

Formal education is the first level and, as such, it is consistent and coherent in the characteristics that are pointed out to it. The other levels appeared after and do not present the characteristics of the first.

Regarding the context, several authors (Canário, 1999; Porcarelli, 2009) state that the formal level is related to education and has as context the school. If we take into account the intentionality of education, the formal level has a clearly assumed intentionality, since it has a final objective defined at the outset which is the instruction of individuals (Canário, 1999).

Regarding the structural criterion formal education is associated with the hierarchical structure of education (Coombs, 1989). According to the author the formal education integrates a graduated and chronological system, which goes from primary school to university education and which can cover a range of academic programs and specialties. Canário (1999) considers that formal education is based on the vertical teacher-student relationship, is structured and organized from programs and schedules and includes rigid evaluative processes and a certification. Thus, formal education has a rigidly structured character, has a defined path, presents well-defined objectives and competences, establishes methodologies, methods and strategies to achieve its aims. It is an education that points to the norm, and is therefore the same for everyone.

With regard to the characteristics of formal education, this is seen as the most effective way to respond to cognitive needs related to literacy and numeracy (Radcliffe & Colleta, 1989). Formal education is rigid in several ways, such as context, objectives and structure. This education focuses on the product. On the other hand, it can be defined as a reproduction mechanism, i.e. the school can transform social, economic, cultural and linguistic inequalities into school inequalities. From this perspective, formal education can be exclusive for those who diverge from the norm.

Non formal education

Coombs (1989) was one of the first advocates of non-formal education and this author considered that non-formal education could be the answer and solution to many of the limitations of formal/school education. If we take into account the context, non-formal education refers to the educational actions that take place outside the traditional school system and is directed to a certain group of people (Coombs, 1989). The educational practices at this level can be developed in different contexts.

Non-formal education, like formal education, is assumed. Non-formal education can be defined as any organized, systematic educational activity developed outside the formal system, which aims to offer any type of learning to a specific group (UNESCO, 2010).

In this form of education, there is the intention to respond to a learning need that is identified in a group. Educational practices are defined according to this need and these objectives and are developed in order to respond to it (Coombs, 1989).

Non-formal education has a structured character, but it is variable. In other words, it is flexibility if compared to the formal level. Non-formal education can have schedules, programmes and places but is always adapted to "unique contexts and audiences" (Canário, 1999, p. 80). Non-formal educational practices do not have a pre-defined path but may have variable paths. This education presents objectives and competences and establishes alternative methodologies, methods and strategies, other than formal ones, to achieve its aims. The approach taken from non-formal education may differ depending on the audience, context, constraints, possibilities, needs, etc.

Contrary to formal education which focuses on cognitive needs, non-formal education focuses on issues related to the individual's technical skills and development. Thus, non-formal education is related to the interests and life of the individual and is mainly based on the individual's intrinsic learning and motivation to learn (Radcliffe & Colleta, 1989).

Canário (2006) makes an analogy of non-formal educational processes with the invisible face of the moon or the submerged tip of the iceberg. For this author, the educational practices based on the non-formal framework are related to participation, with the transmission of knowledge and the exchange of knowledge, strengthening ties of belonging and the construction of the collective identity of a group (Gohn, 2006). Entewistle (1989) states that non-formal education is a targeted learning, which has decentralised, community-inspired and democratic implications.

Educational practices at this level are comprehensive and important for all ages and life stages. Although non-formal education is targeted at specific groups, it is not necessarily aimed at the poor and excluded. On the other hand, the individuals who participate in these processes may be the most qualified (holders of higher education, such as doctors, scientists and engineers) when they want to keep up to date with their fields of knowledge or seek new knowledge.

Coombs (1989) states that this type of education is low-cost, can often be supported by voluntary work and has facilities and benefits. Some of the benefits are the potential for cooperation and integration with other development agents and the potential for adaptation to the demands of society and the labor market.

According to Freire (1996), non-formal education has an inherent intrinsic process, which is directly related to the concept of awareness and can lead to the liberation of the person and consequently the community. According to Coombs (1989), this education can also be seen as a tool for the promotion of specializations and functions that the school does not achieve. Through non-formal education people can learn specific professional and social skills and be more productive and participatory in society. It can develop processes linked to the construction and reconstruction of conceptions of the world and about the world, forms the individual for life and its adversities (Gohn, 2006).

For Gohn (1998), non-formal education designates a complex process that can be divided into several dimensions:

i) political learning: education works as a process "that generates awareness in individuals" (p. 516) and thus individuals are aware of their political responsibility;

ii) empowerment of individuals to work through the development of skills and capabilities;

iii) the exercise of practices aimed at solving social problems. Individuals group together to form a collective with a view to achieving a community objective;

iv) learning formal content in forms and spaces that are not schools. In this case, although teaching is formal, it is spontaneous and flexible;

v) education developed by the media;

vi) education for life.

In non-formal education people learn according to their experience. On the other hand, this type of education is lived as a concrete praxis of a group. Although the result is 'individually absorbed', it is collective (Gohn, 1998, p. 520). This type of education is linked to human creativity, so there is a strong relationship between non-formal education and new knowledge. Non-formal education has a flexible character, privileges the process more than the product and is inclusive. On the other hand, educational practices at this level feed on the diversity of contexts and individuals.

Pinto (2009) bases non-formal education on two fields. According to the author, the first field is confused with the "learning that takes place outside the school"; the second is understood as the animated set of ludic activities, which can have a more or less accentuated pedagogical aspect.

Informal education

Informal education is related to the processes of socialization of individuals that take place in the family or community since early childhood (Quintana, 1994; Gohn, 2006). Informal education is not assumed. It occurs naturally from the relationships that are established or from the reproduction of social and cultural patterns (Quintana, 1994).

The informal level is unstructured. This level corresponds to "all potentially educational situations, even if not conscious or intentional, on the part of the addressees, focusing on unstructured and organised situations" (Canário, 1999, p. 80). This level does not have a defined path and does not define objectives or competences. On the other hand, it does not establish any methodology since it occurs naturally and intentionally. The fact that this dimension is not structured and is not very visible often causes these processes to be "forgotten" or not considered important (Canário, 1999).

For last, Coombs (1989) states that informal education is the lifelong process by which individuals acquire attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from everyday experiences and that it is influenced by existing resources and the surrounding environment (family, neighbours, work, social networks). Gohn (1998) reinforces the idea by stating that informal education concerns spontaneous and/or natural processes, which are "loaded with values and representations" (p. 517).

In short, the range of educational processes encompasses different practices, actors, models and logics of action. In addition to the diversity among the various modalities presented, it is also possible to verify practices that involve more than one modality simultaneously (Bruno, 2014), since these modalities are not exclusive.

With regard to the educational contexts aimed at old adults, these may arise as spaces of conviviality that integrate dynamics of non-formal and informal education. Additionally, they can allow reflection, critical thinking and a more conscious participation (Formosa, 2014). The importance of these contexts is due to the fact that these individuals can have an active and intervening posture there (Veloso, 2011) and can continue to live and follow a changing world (Jacob, 2005), as well as intervene in the societies in which they live (Zemaitaityté, 2014). In this line of thinking, we believe that in certain educational activities aimed at adults, there may be a relationship between non-formal and informal education, reflection and participation.

7. Education and learning for older adults

7.1. Older adults' education

In recent times, the population has aged in the sense that the statistical index for older adults has increased and has become more visible.

Older adults do not form a unified and homogeneous group in our society. On the contrary, taking into account all their life experience and learning, this age group can be considered the most heterogeneous of all. The education of older adults includes a significant variety of education and learning activities in which older adults can participate. These activities can be developed in formal, non-formal or informal settings (Findsen, 2005).

Given the reconceptualization of education, which is associated with globalisation, technology and changes in the role of the State, the measures implemented through educational policies have moved away from the group of older adults (Veloso, 2011).

Some documents have drawn attention to the issue of older people's learning. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights mentions the right to education through ageing. So, education is seen as a fundamental right that cannot be denied. On the other hand, this education must be adjusted to the specific needs and characteristics of individuals (Veloso, 2008).

As explained before the V International Conference on Adult Education (UNESCO, 1999), focused for the first time, contribution that older people can make to society. In the document the need to recognize the skills and competences of these individuals and the importance of

enhancing opportunities and conditions for their learning are highlighted. This document states that "these older adults have much to offer to the development of society". Therefore, "it is important that they have the same opportunity to learn as young people" (UNESCO, 1999).

It is important to bear in mind the obstacles and limitations that exist and that adults face, taking into account the priorities that are given to criteria almost exclusively aimed at the labour market. These criteria greatly limit the participation of this group (Melo, 1997). In order to better understand this point, we consider it is relevant to take in consideration the settings of education for old adults.

7.2. Non-governmental organisations and old adults' education

Older adult education in Europe has been an area of significant intervention of civil society organisations, namely non-governmental organisations and third sector organisations, which have promoted non-formal and informal education projects and activities with significant impact on older adults (Zemaitaityté, 2014).

Contrary to the education of children and the education of young people, in which the presence of the State has been determinant, this field has benefited from the intervention of entities that, in their origin, are not directly linked to the State, nor to the market.

At the V Conference in Hamburg, the commitment was made to

> encourage greater recognition, participation and accountability of non-governmental organisations and local community groups: (i) recognising the role that these organisations play in the awareness and empowerment of populations, which is of vital importance for democracy, peace and development; (b) recognising and adequately financing the role of these organisations. (UNESCO, 1999, p. 42)

Non-governmental organizations can encompass initiatives developed by associations, organizations, foundations, networks or popular movements. Some of the characteristics of these entities are: the private, non-profit character, objectives aimed at benefiting the community or its members, the self-governed and voluntary character of the participation and its level of organization (in many cases non-formal). These entities are also based on a set of common values such as solidarity, participation and social roots (Ferreira, 2009).

Each organisation has its objective and its purposes, which vary according to the contexts in which they intervene and the problems experienced by the local communities in which they play an important role. These entities often emerge as agents of transformation and have been

considered "relevant for the survival of the public sphere", since they are sensitive to the specific problems of the populations and seek ways to solve them beyond what is carried out by the State and the market (Guimarães, 2013, p. 53).

These entities intervene and act within the framework of a social and cultural environment. As stated by Melo (2007), the activities developed are important in the sense that they are often more "appropriate to the various territorial, social and cultural contexts" in which they are inserted (p. 33). In this sense, these organizations, considered civil society organizations, seem to contribute significantly to the promotion of educational processes in the field of popular or community education.

Through the many projects they develop, these organisations indirectly improve and promote civic attitudes and values in individuals. The subjects who participate in these organizations are provided with tools, become aware of existing social problems and are encouraged to take a stance to solve them (Zemaitaityté, 2014). In these organizations, AE is often developed from participatory and co-produced processes (Muahmad, 2005).

According to Gohn (2006), non-governmental organisations "have know-how in methodologies, strategies and action programmes" (p. 514) and have therefore been central in recent years, since they stimulate voluntary work and value the revitalisation of local cultures. These entities, as promoters of non-formal and informal education dynamics, promote necessary learning for individuals, design and test innovative practices that are not subject to institutional pressures and limits. These practices can also be defined and adjusted from the programmes and objectives of the entity, as stated by Melo (2007), and are the privileged space for adult learning and social change (Muahmad, 2005).

Non-governmental organisations appear as privileged spaces for old adults, especially when they are settings that promote mobilising and transversal projects, aiming at sharing and mutual help (Paúl, 2006). In these organisations, individuals are often given space to share their opinions and contributions. In other cases, it is the individuals themselves who define and organise the activities to be developed in the contexts (Zemaitaityté, 2014).

Overall, the work carried out in these organisations may allow the expression of identities and the creation of feelings of belonging. At the same time, they enable the creation of objectives and social adaptation (Albuquerque, 2008). In this sense, in these entities, participation is an essential and indispensable tool for the creation of an identity or belonging to a given collective.

8. Education and the Universities of the Third Age

As we could see in last sections, more and more, older adults need to be recognised as a community resource with assigned roles and functions. Contact with educational and social contexts seems to be essential for this to happen (Formosa, 2014).

Universities of the Third Age (U3A) can be defined as social and cultural centres, where individuals acquire new knowledge or prove what they already know (Formosa, 2014). Several studies have shown the potential of the U3A and its social and psychological benefits for the old adults and for society itself (Machado & Medina, 2012; Pocinho, 2014; Veloso, 2011). For example, Machado and Medina (2012) talk about the motivations that lead adults to learning contexts, more specifically to senior universities. These authors show an interest in updating and acquiring new knowledge as the main motivation. The authors also mention that these institutions "promote the sociability, well-being and personal fulfilment of those who attend them, as well as an optimised perception of themselves, their social role and ageing" (Machado & Medina, 2012, p.1). Thus, these spaces may contribute not only to the valuation of older adults, but also to the end of stereotypical and discriminatory representations that conceive of the "old" as inactive beings and a burden on society. A concept connected with participation in U3A is the one of productivity. The old adults, participating in these contexts have the possibility to continue active and productive. It contributes to their auto realization and a social active life, as confirmed by Deluigi (2008). This author affirms that each person brings an original contribution in an attitude of dialogue with the world, proposing their own project and, at the same time, leaving themselves open to uncertainty in a creative way, going in search of alternatives, new ways, questioning themselves and questioning others (Deluigi, 2008).

In turn, Pocinho (2014) shows us that the U3A have a highly positive impact on students' lives, since they have a high quality of life as well as personal satisfaction. Pocinho concludes that since the U3A is a space for learning and socialization, it allows the fight against social isolation and several associated diseases. According to this author, the U3A thus have a double commitment: on the one hand, a new experience regarding lifelong learning, on the other hand, as a response to a social challenge given the increase in this group within the current social pyramid (Pocinho, 2014).

Veloso (2011) focuses on the participation of older people in the U3A and concludes that this participation seems to give them the possibility to enjoy and develop their social networks, strengthening their social capital. On the other hand, it seems to help in the transitions from active life to retirement, promoting a better adaptation to this new phase of their lives. In

educational terms, new learning can be seen as a challenge to this phase of their lives, but it also seems to help adults to be more aware of their personal condition and emancipation in social terms (Formosa, 2014; Pocinho, 2014; Veloso, 2011).

8.1. The history of U3A

The first U3A was established in France in 1973. Pierre Vellas recognises the demographic issues related to the increase in average life expectancy and longevity and, believing that universities could respond to this need, sought to combine education for the old adults and gerontologic research in order to promote the well-being of individuals (Formosa, 2014). Its idea was to associate leisure time occupation, leisure, teaching and research. Thus, the first U3A was created in Toulouse, with the aim of responding to the needs of retired people's occupation (Jacob, 2005). The objectives of this university were to promote socio-cultural activities that would contribute to the promotion of health and living conditions of older people. In this sense, seminars and conferences were organised in order to promote the sharing of multidisciplinary knowledge and the participation of these individuals (Kennedy, 1989).

Shortly after the first university in France and associated with self-organized movements and civic initiatives related to the Portuguese context, the first university appeared in Portugal in 1978 to respond to the lack of responses and educational opportunities (Jacob, 2005). Contrarily of what happened in France, many of the U3A appeared as autonomous institutions, created by groups of friends.

However, it was in the mid-1990s that many other similar entities appeared and only between 2004 and 2008 more than 50 of these entities were founded in Portugal. There are currently more than 500 of them spread throughout the country. Despite the different designations adopted, these institutions have common characteristics, approximate objectives and involve subjects in similar age groups.

In Italy the first U3A was the University of the Third Age of Turin, founded in 1975 as a coordination of the various spontaneous groups (Guidolin, 1995, p. 243). It evolves and since 1979 it has become an institution with programs and methodologies. The first spontaneous experience in 1975 was followed in the following years by the foundation of other universities throughout Italy.

In the following years there was a great development of this initiative and federations of universities of the third age were formed. In Italy U3A arise on the initiative of the most diverse contexts such as cultural centres, trade unions, voluntary groups, associations. They are

therefore mainly based on local volunteering, from which they draw the enormous ideal wealth but also the innate precariousness that comes until today. Hence the liveliness and fragility of the Italian U3A, which undoubtedly meet the needs of users and the territory, but are not always culturally qualified (Dal Ferro, 1992).

They present, in national and regional territory, a consistent number and among them a considerable differentiation in the: legal nature, historical path, objectives and activities. On other side, they have assumed the most varied names: University of the Third Age, Popular University, People's itinerant University, University of adults and seniors, University of Leisure etc. In addition, U3A are affiliated to different associations or federations such as, UNITRE (University of Three Ages), FEDERUNI (Italian Federation of Universities of the Third Age), CNUPI (National Confederation of Popular Universities), AUPTEL (Association of People's Universities of the Third Age and the Free Age).

Several authors define two main U3A models:

i)   the French model that favoured the creation of entities with a structure close to the traditional universities;

ii)   ii) the British model that was developed based on non-profit associations linked to the third sector.

Despite the interest that these entities may have, highlighted by several authors, as we have seen, some studies reveal that the issue of educational provision and learning in the U3A may be an ambiguous one. On the one hand, there seems to be an offer of passive educational activities of a transmissive nature, in which there is no dynamics, nor participation, in essence, of banking education in the words of Freire (1967). On the other hand, there are activities where there is a dynamic relationship between the actors. In these activities, the old adults have the opportunity to participate and have a word in the direction and context of their learning (Formosa, 2014). Here, older adult education works with the aim of developing the empowerment of these individuals, in order to take a transformative attitude and confront their own social system (Formosa, 2011). Thus, critical reflection on learning can be a tool that will allow individuals to "think" about their actions and experiences in a dynamic, reflective and constructive way.

8.2. Aims of U3A

The U3A can be seen as a "socio-educational response, which aims to regularly create and stimulate social, cultural, educational and social activities, preferably for and by those over 50 years of age" (RUTIS, 2010). The educational practices of these contexts are based on a logic of lifelong education and have no certification objectives.

Veloso (2007) states that the "Universities of the Elderly can be seen as diverse spaces, more or less emancipatory, depending on the educational practices they develop and the objectives they define" (Veloso, 2007, p. 256). U3A seems to have a predominant role in the promotion of personal development and in the possibility of generating the sharing of knowledge and experiences.

U3A can be autonomous and flexible entities, in the sense that they operate independently of each other. However, it is possible to set some objectives that are usually common, such as:

- Encourage the participation and organisation of seniors in cultural, citizenship, teaching and leisure activities.

- Disseminate history, sciences, traditions, solidarity, the arts, tolerance, places and other socio-cultural phenomena among seniors.

- To be a pole of information and dissemination of services, duties and rights of seniors.

- To develop interpersonal and social relations between the different generations.

- Encourage research on gerontological issues (Jacob, 2012, p. 22-23).

Veloso also defines as main objectives of the U3A: "the promotion, enhancement and integration of the elderly", "the contact with reality and local social dynamics", "the occupation of leisure time", and "avoid isolation and marginalization" (Veloso, 2011). Within the framework of these objectives, the U3A seems to be based on a basic triad - learning, participation and socialisation - which seeks to satisfy and meet the educational and social needs, while promoting the well-being of the old adults who are part of them (Jacob, 2005). In this line of thinking, the participation in U3A educational practices not only seems to create a predisposition to participate in various levels of social life, but is also a first step towards an active ageing process (Formosa, 2011; Kolland & Wanka, 2014):

- learning seems to have a strong connection with the health of individuals. These adults can spend their free time and avoid problems such as social isolation and symptoms of certain pathologies such as depression and anxiety (Pocinho, 2014).

- When ageing occurs in a social context or in a social network of friends, it seems to have potential and benefits, not only at an individual level, but also for the other elements that share these social contexts (Formosa, 2011; Kolland & Wanka, 2014);

- Older adult education can help to combat age, class and gender stereotypes (Kolland & Wanka, 2014);

- Participation in the U3A seems to ensure a broad social participation, since older adults who are linked to educational settings usually perform voluntary work and seem to be aware of their civic and political responsibility (Formosa, 2011; Zemaitaityté, 2014).

These entities seems to act as an adult education space, a place of culture and conviviality and, at the same time, can be seen as a social and promotional project, as well as a health prevention project, since they contribute to a healthy lifestyle (Jacob, 2005; Golding, 2011).

8.3. Older adults' education and well-being

In recent years, researchers have shown an increased interest in studying the well-being of individuals and specifically of adults in later life. The intention of these studies was to understand the relationship between learning in later life and life satisfaction (DeNeve, Diener, Tay, & Xuereb, 2013; Formosa, 2014). The results of these studies reveal that older adults can find meaning and satisfaction in their lives through learning and learning contexts (Field, 2009).

Well-being can be discussed from different perspectives. Some authors (e.g. Simões et al., 2003) refer to well-being as related to the notion of quality of life, which includes the conditions of life and life experience. The World Health Organization (World Health Organization, 2012) proposes a definition of well-being that constitutes two dimensions: objective and subjective. It includes factors such as life experience and life circumstances, which entail social norms and values: "Subjective well-being comprises all the various evaluations, positive and negative, that people make on their lives and the affective reactions of people to their experiences" (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2012, p. 8). Well-being and health, which are correlated, are also subjected to other determinants, such as social systems and life circumstances (i.e. education, work, social relationships, and environments). All of these circumstances can influence well-being, psychological functioning, and the affective state (World Health Organization, 2012). Subjective well-being can have a constructive effect

on health and longevity, the quality of social relationships, and work outcomes (DeNeve et al., 2013). It is positively associated with health, high levels of social and civic engagement, and greater resilience when facing external crises (Field, 2009). Some research and recent practices for adults have shown that education and learning in later life has enormous potential for participants' lives (Field, 2009). People, regardless of age, need to be in constant contact with learning activities This not only contributes at the individual level, directly influencing the attitudes and behaviours that affect mental well-being (Field, 2009), but also facilitates the development of the community. Learning can help to increase older adults' abilities to do things for themselves and can improve their levels of social and personal transformation (Formosa, 2014).

Older adults should not be seen nor see themselves as a separate group from society, "but instead should be integrated in the community whilst, of course, ensuring that their specific needs and interests are met" (Formosa, 2014, p. 16). Learning processes can build networks, trust, reciprocity, and social connections. This means that older adults can go further in their life opportunities if they participate in society, cooperating each other, with the younger groups or social institutions. For older adults' inclusion is a central aspect (ibid.). Nevertheless, learning in later life can bring new possibilities, mainly in regard to the family (e.g. relationships with grandchildren), the neighbourhood (close community), and peers (social group). The participation of older adults in U3A activities seems to increase their physical, intellectual, and social outcomes (Formosa, 2014) and, consequently, their quality of life (Jacob, 2012). In this sense, participation promotes social integration and the development of productive, meaningful lives while enhancing older adults' knowledge and cultures (Zemaitaityté, 2014).

SECOND PART: THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

9.Methodology

In this chapter we are going to do a general analysis of the qualitative research. Then, we will focus the case study method used in our research. In second place we will present the research question, context of the research, so as our research design. Here we analyse some of the techniques we used in our research, such as interviews and observation. Finally, we are going to make clear our methodologic choices, referring our research questions and how our methodology can respond to it. The aim of the research is to understand the outcomes on learners lives of old education programs or activities in specific contexts (U3A). Given the complexity of the phenomenon (outcomes of U3A in learners' lives) this research takes the form of a multiple case study. The multiple cases gave us the a more complex view of the phenomenon and the observation of different realities provided the possibility to understand it better and provide more complete and steady results (Stake, 2006).

9.1 Qualitative research

Introduction and previous definition

Being our work supported in a qualitative focus, we decided to start to analyse the qualitative research perspective. Several researchers use the qualitative research expression as a general definition of all the researches that are based mostly in qualitative data, as for example case studies, ethnographic research, life stories methodology, narrative research (Schwandt, 2001). The complex nature of qualitative research makes almost impossible to find a unique sense for the concept. However, the fast-social changes and the quantity of universes of life (Flick, 2002) confront the researchers with new social contexts and new perspectives. In this sense, based in the quantity of directions that the world can assume for individuals, the qualitative research can be particularly important.

Merriam (1998) defines qualitative research as a broad concept that covers various forms and helps to understand and explain social phenomena, with as little intrusion as possible in the context. According to Schwandt (2001, p.213), qualitative research tries to "understand the meaning of human action". Qualitative research implies an interpretative and naturalistic approach. This means that researchers study the things in their natural environments, trying to achieve meaning or interpret phenomena by remaining faithful to the meanings that people attribute to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). On the other hand, the researcher must be an

individual with preparation and rigor, who shows openness and flexibility of adaptation, as shown by Pérez Serrano (1994, p. 51) "it is not a matter of applying a few instruments and analysing their results, but it is a matter of redefining and reworking the instruments and categories according to the requirements of the object of study and the demands of reality".

From the various definitions indicated, it can be noted that seems to exist a commitment between qualitative research and a naturalistic approach where stands out the interpretation of the subjects studied. On the other hand, is contrary to positivist ideas. The qualitative research can be seen as an assault on the positivist tradition and for this reason lacks the value of objectivity. In our specific case our intention is to use this methodology for the potential it offers (to bring out personal meanings) and which - in this sense - has a different, but no less significant reliability (and therefore a "objectivity") than the traditional positivist approach.

Characteristics of qualitative research

All over the years, several authors tried to state the characteristics of the qualitative research. Taylor and Bogdan (1998) state that in qualitative research: the research work is inductive; the researcher sees the scenario and people from a holistic perspective; the researchers are sensitive to the effects they can cause on the research landscape; people are understood in their frame of reference and all perspectives (people and scenarios) are worthy of study; the researcher suspends his own beliefs and perspectives, looking at things as if they were happening for the first time; the methods used are humanistic; investigators emphasize the validity of their investigation; the research is an art and the researcher is the artisan, since he is stimulated to create his own method.

Biklen and Bogdan (1994, p. 179) describe qualitative research as:

➢ Inductive, because it put aside the positivist paradigm and look for the information from down to the top;

➢ Holistic, since the data is analysed having in consideration the all (group) and not just the individual;

➢ Descriptive, the data is collected from words and not numbers;

➢ Researchers are more interested in processes than in the product;

➢ Data arise from a natural environment, everything comes naturally, without manipulations and simulations. The individuals don't notice that they're being investigated, because this type of research "minimize or control the effects it has on the subjects of investigation".

For last, Merriam (1998) emphasis the following characteristics: researchers are interested in understanding the meaning that people have built; the investigator is the main tool for data collection and data analysis; qualitative research usually presupposes field work. For this, the researcher must observe the events, talk to people, in their natural environment; firstly, uses a strategy of inductive research; focusing on processes, meanings and understandings, the product of qualitative study is richly descriptive.

Having in consideration the characteristics pointed for the several authors we previously describe; we would like to stress some point that seem stronger as they stand common to all. Some examples are the fact that qualitative research is interpretative and inductive. The induction is a characteristic of qualitative research, that is contrary to the deductive character of traditional investigations, of rationalist inspiration. Besides the induction, another common point concerning all authors is the interpretation. The interpretation is one of the fundamental points in the qualitative paradigm or interpretative paradigm.

In any research, it is important to bear in mind the research paradigm and the position of the researcher. Bogdan and Biklen (1994) define paradigm as what allow looking at the world, identifying what is important. According to the authors, a paradigm consists of an open set of assertions, concepts or propositions logically related and that guide the thought" and the investigation itself (p. 52). Guba (1990) considers the paradigm, or interpretive scheme, "a set of beliefs that guide action" (p. 17).

The researcher can rely on various paradigms. According to Aires (2011), each paradigm presents its demands to the researcher and includes the questions and interpretations he or she makes of the problems. These paradigms respond not only to theory, but also have a practical utility and importance in the view of the research problem. Guba and Lincoln (1994) propose an analysis of the paradigm based on a belief system. This system is formulated from questions raised by ontological, epistemological and methodological aspects.

Ontological questions relate to the nature of knowledge and what can be known from reality. However, it is important to take into account that there are opposing currents, some that defend an objective reality (independent of the human being) and others that defend a subjective reality (the individual builds his own reality). Epistemological questions respond to what is known and what may come to be known. The methodological questions are related to how the researcher intends to build knowledge (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). These questions presented by Guba and Lincoln can be seen as a whole, since they are interconnected and conditioned, as can be seen in the table below:

Table 1: Ontological, epistemological and methodological dimensions of an investigation

Dimensions	Questions
Ontology	What is the nature of knowledge? Or what is the nature of social reality? What can be known?
Epistemological	What is the nature of the relationship between what is known and what is known? How is it known?
Methodological	How should the researcher act to build knowledge?

Own elaboration based on the ideas of Guba and Lincoln (1994).

As previously attested, the interpretation is a common reference to the qualitative investigators. To comprehend it, is important to understand the interpretation. According to Denzin (1998) interpretation is a process that clarifies the multiple meanings of an event, object, experience or text. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1994) the interpretative paradigm aims to understand and explain. The researcher develops and deepens the knowledge of a situation in a given context. The interpretive paradigm allows the relativistic study of reality. This paradigm faces the world according to a construction of the social actors themselves, that is, individuals construct the social meaning of events, taking into account the context, space and time in which they find themselves.

According to these assumptions, the interpretive paradigm has the characteristic of not focusing exclusively on objectivity, since it resorts to data that comes from human experiences (subjective). In this sense it is possible to talk about hermeneutics as a theory that interprets the "sense of things" (Bleicher, 1992). This has the role of determining the meaning of words, phrases and symbols. According to the hermeneutic perspective, life can be interpreted and understood, thus denying the existing opposition between objectivity and subjectivity (Bleicher, 1992).

The researcher is intended to have a comprehensive and interpretative posture of reality (Bogdan & Biklen, 1994). It is also important to mention the close relationship with individuals and the ethical issues that the researcher should follow. Fontana and Frey (1994) refer to "informed consent" on the part of participants involved in the study. Stake (1994) also reinforces the importance of ethics and privacy, since there is a direct relationship with people's private spaces. Before observing educational practices or conducting interviews, it is necessary to inform individuals of what will be done and for what purpose.

9.2. Case study method

When it comes to a case study investigation there is the desire to "understand complex social phenomena". In other words, the case study is intended to respond to the how and why of a given event, taking into account the significant and holistic characteristics of reality (Yin, 2002, p. 21).

According to Creswell (2013) the case study method "explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in depth data collection involving multiple sources of information… and reports a case description and case themes" (p. 97). Stake (1994) characterizes the case study as an intensive and globalizing analytical description of a given object, situation or phenomenon, emphasizing its own characteristics and what makes it unique. Sousa (2009) states that one of the major advantages of the case study is that it allows us to cross a variety of instruments that will help to identify the interactive processes specific to the case and that allow us to understand it.

For Fragoso (2004), the case study aims to understand human action; people should be seen as subjects and not as objects; social actors are producers of meaning and builders of social reality itself; subjectivity is essential. The author emphasizes that in a case study it is first of all important to know the context. This is the only way to understand people and the phenomenon itself. Human beings are not simply scattered individuals; they develop an integrity among themselves from the moment they are intrinsically linked. On the other hand, it is important to keep in mind that it will never be possible to know everything about a given case, so it is up to the researcher to decide how far he wants to go, so that it is possible to achieve the goals he proposes (Stake, 1994).

Merriam (1988) suggests the following characteristics for qualitative case studies:

- Particularist: focuses on a particular situation or event, programme or phenomenon. the case is important for what it reveals of the phenomenon or for what it may represent;

- Descriptive: the product of the case study is a dense description of the phenomenon under study;

- Heuristic: the case study helps the understanding of the phenomenon under study. can lead to the discovery of new meanings, expand the experienced reader or confirm what he already knows.

When we talk about a case study, it is also important to define and analyse the different typologies advocated by the various authors. Bogdan & Biklen (1994) define the case study as single or multiple. The single ones are those that focus on a single case while the multiple case studies encompass the study of several single cases. According to Yin (1993), regardless of whether they are single or multiple cases, case studies can be:

- exploratory, this is defining as a beginning for others;

- descriptive, in which the full description of the phenomenon is given;

- extensive, in which data are presented that have a cause-and-effect relationship.

According to Stake (1994; 1998), case studies can be divided into three typologies: intrinsic, instrumental and collective or multiple. Intrinsic case studies aim to understand the particular case. It is in their particularity that the focus of the investigation is found. Instrumental case studies are used when one intends to study a case with the intention of clarifying a certain theme or theory. Here, the case study has a secondary interest, functions only as a support and aims to help the understanding of something, such as, for example, a theory. Finally, collective case studies or multiple case studies study a set of cases at the same time. These cases aim to investigate a more general phenomenon or condition. These cases do not all need to be defined or to be directly related to each other, since the most important is the phenomenon itself.

We must not forget that the case study, as a qualitative methodology, can have external influences and different interpretations. The same case can be interpreted differently by two different researchers; or taking into account the historical, cultural, physical, social, political and economic context, the same case can be interpreted in different ways by the same researcher (Stake, 1995).

Yin (1997) argues that the case study has five essential tools: the questions to be carried out during the research; the ability to listen and also understand between the lines; the adaptability and flexibility to unforeseen events that may occur; the understanding of issues; and the impartiality and mastery of prejudices.

According to Fragoso (2004), the most important aspects to take into account when developing a case study are openness, flexibility and dynamism during its development. It is essential that there is a permanent dialogue between the various phases of research and that the emerging dynamics serve to clarify the research and refine the data obtained. The combination of all these factors may lead to an increase in interpretations and, consequently, to more significant conclusions (Fragoso, 2004).

Multiple case study

For multiple case research, the cases need to be similar in some aspects, "we can use the case as an arena or host or fulcrum to bring many functions and relationships together for study" (Stake, 2006, p. 2). The same author attests that in the multiple case research, we work with more than one case, but the single case is of most interest because it belongs to a particular collection of cases. Moreover, the different cases of the study should somehow bound together. Multiple case study research is a strategy of inquiry searching to gain a better understand of the phenomenon in study through the evidences emerging from its multiple and diverse manifestations that are visible from the different cases (Stake, 2006). Having in consideration that each case is a complex entity with a specific contextualization and connection with the phenomenon (Stake, 2006), the analysing of multiple cases could reveal compelling and robust explanations for the phenomenon itself (Yin, 1993).

In order to conduct a multiple case study research, the first thing to do is to identify the unit of analyses, in other words, the cases. These cases should answer to specific propositions and criteria (Yin, 1993).

According to Eisenhardt (1991), the total of cases in a multiple case study depends of variables as how much new information the cases bring and how much is known. In the moment of the choice of the cases, Stake recommends that we should give priority to the cases that seem to offer the opportunity to learn a more (Stake, 2006).

Considering what was previously mentioned about case study method (specifically multiple case study) this was identified as a suitable approach to investigate the stated topic as we can study the phenomenon from different context and have a more rich and complete idea of it.

The generalization in case study

The generalization in case studies has been a much-debated topic in recent years and one of the main criticisms made of the case study method is related precisely to their ability to formulate generalizations. The possibility of producing theories and general laws from a study is an important question. Some authors agree that in the case study is at stake a kind of inference or generalizations that in its character is very distinct from that which is made in quantitative studies (Mitchell, 2000, cit. In Fragoso, 2004). According to the author, these generalizations can be called as logical, theoretical or analytical.

According to some authors, case studies can be used in several forms: they can provender naturalistic generalization processes (Stake, 2000) or serve as a facilitator of the transfer of findings from one context to another, representing working hypotheses (Guba & Lincoln, 2000). As a rule, the generalizations are statements that are made, independent of the context and time (Guba & Lincoln, 2000). It is important to bear in mind that the objective of the case study is oriented to the particularization (Fragoso, 2004). On the other hand, in the case study itself, the investigator throughout the study has the possibility to making small internal inferences that can give rise to small generalizations (Stake, 1998).

If we think in positivist generalization, it constitutes a universal law, that can be applicable to the whole of the context, whatever the time and space. For other words the results of a study can be generalized to other cases. It doesn't happen with the qualitative case study, because this typology of study is not able to lead to the arrival of such generalisations (Guba & Lincoln, 2000). In this sense, it is possible to assign a different meaning to generalisation. We cannot say that the case study has the fundamental intention of producing traditional generalisations, but the study may represent a path to the general laws of this domain (Pérez Serrano, 1994). According to Stake (2000), the case studies may contribute to other types of alternative generalisations, which represent intermediate solutions in relation to the normative positions (mentioned above).

Having in consideration the last assumptions, some authors defend that is possible to produce alternative generalizations. According to these authors, we reach three ways to produce alternative generalizations. The first is pointed out by Robert Stake. According to the author, personal knowledge is seen as a form of generalization. The case studies are one of the methods that allows to achieve harmony with personal experiences, functioning as a basis natural for generalization. This generalization is a "naturalistic generalization", based on the intuitive and empirical, and not a scientific induction: "the naturalistic generalizations develop into a person as a product of their experience" (Stake, 2000, p. 22). The naturalistic generalization follows the fundamental principles of what represents the essence of the case study.

The second proposal is by Yvonna Lincoln and Egon Guba. These authors propose replacing the traditional idea of generalisation with another wording that is based on the working hypotheses of the study. From this perspective, the whole generalization is on working hypothesis, not a conclusion. These ideas defend that the factors are unique in a specific context. Thus, the researcher should describe and interpret each of the situations he encounters throughout its investigation (Lincoln & Guba, 1994; Patton, 1990).

Finally, Patton (1990) has another proposal. The author defends hypotheses of work and research designs that are balanced and that can be used for extrapolations. This proposal allows the use of knowledge from one case to another: "Extrapolations are modest speculations on the likely applicability of findings to other situations (...) are logical, thoughtful and problem-oriented rather than purely empirical, statistical and probabilistic" (p. 489).

The last two proposals seem to be very important, as both working hypotheses and extrapolations make possible to see that the conclusions of a case study may be important for other cases, taking into consideration the unique conditions to every context. In this way, the transfer of knowledge produced can be an important factor in increasing the construction of a significant scientific heritage (Fragoso, 2004).

9.3. Research context and Exploratory phase

Before to start the research, it was necessary to establish some contacts and conversations to be able to understand the field of old adult education and the direction to take to our research. We established some preliminary contacts with significant people, who had any kind of knowledge or connection with the U3A and could be a good departing point to the initial delineation of our research.

In this preliminary phase, besides the contacts with some experts in the field, we also conducted a documentary study to find out what publications and work there are in the research topic and what scientific relevance it could have.

From these both steps, conversations and the documentary research, we achieve to some interesting ideas that we consider as key points for our research project definition and we present here:

- In general, the studies focus on the importance of 'successful' ageing with success being measured in physical, psychology and social terms. However, despite the number and variety of perspectives, most of the research work has been done within the context of traditional disciplines as biology or psychology (Ribeiro & Paúl, 2012). It makes important to continue researching later life education and learning and the implications of such learning;
- There seem to be two obstacles that limit older people participation in education. Older people are not a priority for educational policies which are largely focused on vocational training and the labour market; older people often ascribe meanings to education and learning that differ from the logic pursued in European Union policies.

Regarding the reality of U3A in Portugal and Italy we realised that:

- there is no database of U3A in both countries (Portugal and Italy);
- there is an immense diversity of the contexts, what carries to a large number and typologies of existing U3A;
- The U3A has arisen as a provider of educational activities which claims to make responses to the perceived educational needs and problems of older adults but is not clear what work are they developing and how are they responding to the needs of individuals.

Having in consideration these topics we decided that to be able to define a design and start a research about U3A and old adult education, first was necessary to do two things: i) an exploratory study in a U3A to have a general knowledge of the reality; ii) to construct a database of the universities in the country.

The first country in which this project began to be developed was Portugal. Before starting the research, it was necessary to construct a database at a national level (November 2015 to February 2016). To do this, we established contact with the major networks and associations in Portugal and asked for collaboration, data and contacts. Over the period of the study, around 600 contacts were established. Simultaneously, an exploratory study case of one U3A in the south of Portugal was conducted (from September to November 2015).

Exploratory phase

The exploratory approach adopted (Yin, 1993) is divided in two parts. A first one containing an exploratory study and a construction of a database of the U3A in the country; and a second lead by a questionnaire. The first part allowed an initial contact and the formulation of some considerations for the questionnaire, which was designed some months after. The exploratory study was conducted in a U3A and we sought to know the entity in general, who are the main participants (age group, education, academic and professional qualifications) and what forms of participation are involved. We also aimed to investigate the main choices of older people regarding their participation in these contexts; and to understand the outcomes brought from these initiatives, namely on participation, emancipation and the issue of their well-being.

Following the initial literature review and its analysis, we conducted some informal interviews with the participants in order to get a deeper understanding of these practices, the origin of the

educational-active context and its relevance to these individuals. Our exploratory study included the documentary analysis of lesson schedules, regulations and work produced by participants and analysis of informal conversations (Bogdan & Biklen, 1994) with key participants about the origins and evolution of this group. This was fundamental in establishing an informal relationship and to be able to observe naturally occurring situations that make up much of what occurs in the U3A. Observations (Bell, 1997; Yin, 2002) in U3A were conducted across a variety of teaching sessions.

A semi-structured interview was also carried out (Fontana & Frey, 1994) with the person responsible for the creation of this university, who has been present in all the important moments of the U3A. For last, informal conversations were held with those who participated in the various sessions (namely educators and learners).

With the data we get from this study we were used to identify some points (Ricardo, 2016):

1. Adult participating in this U3A had between 50 and 90 years old. What shows to us the big diversity of the group;

2. The dynamics between the various participants. Some teach and learn at the same time. The horizontal relationship between them seems to give rise to a trust that allows them to have an open and participative posture. In the various disciplines many share their personal and professional experiences, thus contributing to the success of different activities. As our interviewee told us (E1) "*it is amazing to see how they learn together with each other*!".

3. Intergenerational relations are another interesting point. At this U3A, the differences in knowledge between the generations complement each other: either between colleagues, or between educators and learners, or even between grandchildren and grandchildren in some activities that were observed.

4. Despite their age, many of these people were dynamic and were able to participate in a variety of ways in the initiatives promoted. In other words, they were not limited to pre-defined practices previously defined by others. On the contrary, in many cases they suggested activities and dealt with their organisation and planning.

5. For last, the personal sharing and friendship seem to be elements that led to the participation and socialization of these individuals. This seems to promote by one side the level of satisfaction of their lives and by other side to cheer the success of this U3A.

A combination of the conversations with the exploratory study provided a contextual understanding of the U3A in Portugal as of some practices being developed.

Such as in Portugal, also in Italy we had the need to proceed to the creation of the database (November 2016 to May 2017). To arrive to the different contacts and responsible entities, we looked for the bigger associations working in the field and we arrived at 600 contacts of U3A. We get three main associations, that responded to our request of collaboration positively: FEDERUNI and UNITRE and AUSER.

Following the same logic of the "exploratory phase" of the research field, in Italy we conducted an exploratory interview. This interview was conducted to Monsignor Giuseppe Dal Ferro, the responsible to bring the U3A concept in Italy. Mons. Giuseppe Dal Ferro, interested in research and adult education, travelled to Paris, were the first U3A started and used the obtained data to create his own model for adult education.

The exploratory survey

The second phase of our exploratory work was to conduct a survey at national level. Based in the results of the initial exploratory study and having in consideration the complexity of the topic (U3A), before to define our research question we decided that was helpful to have a notion of the reality of U3A. In this sense, we decided to design and create a survey with the aim to get a general perspective of the reality of U3A in both studied countries. This questionnaire had both open and closed questions, being the majority closed. The questionnaire was addressed to a representative of each U3A and in the majority of the cases sent by mail.

In Portugal the survey was sent online for the 300 contacts of our database, and we get a total of 70 valid answers (from January to March 2016).

As happened in Portugal we used the survey also in Italy. In first place we proceed to the translation and adaptation of the questionnaire to Italian language and we send it to the 600 contacts of our database. In Italy it was a little harder to have the responses (July 2017 to July 2018). In order to have the same number of responses for both countries we decided to go directly to some U3A and ask the compilation of the survey in person.

The survey was divided into four parts (approximately 20 minutes to respond). Each part provides to collect specific data and information about the specificities of U3A. In order to give a better idea of the instrument we present the parts with the respective aim:

✓ *Part 1: Presentation and description of the Institution*

This first part aims to trace the environment in which the proposed initiatives take place. It is also necessary in order to collect personal and administrative data and to trace a technical profile of the institution.

✓ *Part 2: Educational field of the Institution*

This second part have a pedagogical nature and aims to collect, above all, qualitative data in order to analyse the pedagogical and educational aspect of the institution.

✓ *Part 3: Examples of activities*

This third part is aimed at highlighting concrete examples that the institution has experienced with its learners and educators. This was important to have a practical idea of the activities, and some points related to, such as aims, methodology and participants evolved.

✓ *Part 4. Final consideration*

The last part is aimed at identifying possible difficulties met by the institution, such as physical, material, human and financial resources. In this part there is also an open and "free" space aimed at comments or suggestions.

Some of the results more significant of the survey and that served to design our research were related to institutions, educative approach and participation:

➢ Regarding the institutions

The survey shows that U3A in Portugal were created between 1978 and 2015 and are supported by a range of different institutions: 32% by IPSS (Private Institutions of Social Solidarity), 31% by associations, 19% by the public sector, including local government, 5% by cooperatives', by others; while 13% receive no external support.

In Italy, according the survey responses, U3A were created between 1979 and 2015 and as in Portugal, are supported by a range of different institutions: 70% by Association for Social Promotion (APS), 3% autonomous, 6% foundation, 6% by Non-profit organisation of social utility; 8% by others; while 7% receive no outside support.

From these data, in both countries is clear the huge diversity of contexts that are supporting U3A.

The responses highlight the diverse aims of U3A. In Portugal these include to "create …diverse cultural, educative, non-formal, recreative activities, (while) being at the same time a place of learning and socialization for the elderly" (SP17) and "to fight the real need, creating activities for the elderly that are still active and autonomous and want to have an educative option; another aim is to promote the process of aging in a positive way, going against the tendency of isolation, loneliness and disability; promote the education, the valorisation of the experience and the opportunity of share with others" (SP34); In Italy some of the aims described by the U3A are "to form active citizens at all times and at all ages; to bring change and renewal in those who participate; to provide new and continuous impulses for life; don't let the brain age; to offer new opportunities to the advancing age; to allow everyone to be a protagonist and

subject of own history; to favour the transmission between the generations" (SI1); another example is "1.Contributing to the cultural and social promotion of learners; 2. To promote, support and implement studies, research and other cultural initiatives for the development of lifelong learning and for the encounter between different generational cultures; 3. Promote the involvement with the territory" (SI30). By the previous data we can see that U3A have diversity of aims being the basic one (in both countries) the learning and socialization of individuals. The other aims seem to be related with the structure that supports the U3A, that can be more connected to cultural and social activities, or research and territory.

> Participants:

From the 70 responses to the questionnaire (answered by a representative of each context) we can see that in Portugal the number of participants (trainees) go beyond 40 and 1000. Relatively to the education background: in 27% of the universities there are people without a schooling background (never went to school) and in 76% of the universities there are participants with a degree.

In Italy we can see that the number of participants (trainees) goes between 40 and 6300. In what concerns to education, in 3% of universities there are people that never went to school and in 24% of universities there are participants with a degree.

Looking to the age of the adults participating in both countries we can see that the most representative group participating, in both countries, is "from 61 to 80 years old" but is possible to find adult aged from 30 years old or less and more than 80 years old.

> Educative approach

To the question: "do you think the educative work developed in this institution is different from the school?" 92% of the responses thought that it was different while 8% felt that the work developed follows the formal or traditional models (this result is the same in both countries!).

In terms of the pedagogic approach of the activities in Portugal, 68% of the replies considered that the project was flexible and not defined *a priori*; 32% identified the existence of a structured, non-flexible curriculum. 52% of the university, says that individuals participate in some way in the design and planning of the activity.

In Italy, 40% answer of U3A replied that the project has a flexible model, not defined *a priori*; 60% say that it is a curricular project completely defined. Only 14% of the university says that individuals participate in some way in the design and planning of the activity.

In the last data, we can see that as educative approach, Portugal seems to be more flexible in the programs and to give more voice to the learners in what concerns the design and the planning of the activities.

Furthermore, from the survey was also interesting to note that many U3A participants as learners are also educators within U3A. Some of responses identify U3A educators as members of the U3A who attend other courses as learners. This puts the traditional dichotomic dynamic of educator-learner into a different context as many involved with U3A are both educators and learners at the same time. In other hand, could be interesting to explore the reasons and the consequences of this relationships and learning dynamics.

From this survey and the data as the ones described above it was possible to have an idea of the field of old adult education and to think and elaborate our research question and our research design.

Furthermore, from the analyse of the survey we were able to select some criteria for the choice of the cases to study deeply. The criteria of the choice were educative aim, educative approach, methodologies used. All the four contexts studied are different regarding the "mother" institution, but they presented similarities in the selected criteria.

9.4. Research questions

Old people have personal richness and incomparable experience and who are often ignored or excluded because they are no longer seen as productive for society. In reaction to this vision, we consider that it is essential to seek contexts and activities that contradict the previous idea. Having in consideration our exploratory phase and the data we get from it, such as the preliminary analyses, we arrive to the topic to follow in our research and we defined our research question.

We were looking to social and cultural contexts that based in educational activities, could give voice to the adults, that develop co-produced practices and promote the participation of individuals. For the other side, it is important to understand what are the outcomes that old adults acquire within their participation on educational contexts and how these outcomes respond to the old adult needs.

To explore the reality of older adults' participation in educational context we conducted a comparative investigation studying different realities of U3A in Portugal and Italy.

Drawing on the thinking already outlined, the investigation compares the situation of four different U3A in Portugal and in Italy to look for clues about old adults' educational contexts and practices in both countries. The main question of the research was: *How different cultural and social contexts, developing old adult education activities give learners outcomes that can respond to their needs?*

As perceived by the complexity and the quantity of topics included in the main research, we decide to define some sub-question in order to facilitate the study.

Sub questions of the research

1- *How are social and cultural contexts (within an educational character) for older adults organized in different countries?*

Our first sub-question explores how contexts for old adults are organized. The aim of this question is to understand the development and organization of the different contexts (U3A) studied.

2- *Why do the older adults want to participate in education?*

The aims of these sub-question are: a) understand the personal motivations to participate in educational contexts (U3A); b) identify the main interests and educational desires of learners.

3- *On what levels do old adults participate in educational contexts?*

The aims of this question are: a) recognise if adults are participating in design, development and evaluation of educational practices, or if they are merely following what is already designed by others; b) identify the different dynamics of participation on learning.

4- *What do old adults perceived as outcomes in their lives, resulting of participation in educational contexts?*

The aims of the fourth sub-question are: a) explore what old adults perceived as their learning in these educational contexts; b) map the perceived learning of the old adults; c) map the outcomes that old adults acquire with their participation on educational contexts; d) understand how adults perceive the importance of these educational contexts in their lives.

9.5. Research design

Having in consideration our exploratory phase and our research question we defined our research design. Regarding the specificities of our multiple study we decided to study four cases, two in Portugal and two in Italy. Also, if the cases have the aim to study the same phenomenon and answer to the same research question, there is a differentiation in the history, context and particular situation of each case. As Stake suggests (2006) in a multiple case study is important to have different cases that give the possibility to learn more and to understand the phenomenon more deeply. Thus, to conduct this multiple study the researcher decided to spend the time thought necessary to understand the case. Also if the research design for the four cases was the same, the researcher had in consideration the diversity and the significance of each case. So, using the same model of research design we decide to adapt it to the particular cases (as we explain after). So supported by Stake (2006) we based our study in a phenomenon (quintain) that is studied by all the cases. These single cases become instrumental for the same interest.

As visible in the picture below each case is single and the total of the four case give the meaning to the Multiple case study. After all studies done, we analysed results together, comparing it and proceeding to the discussion and conclusion of the research.
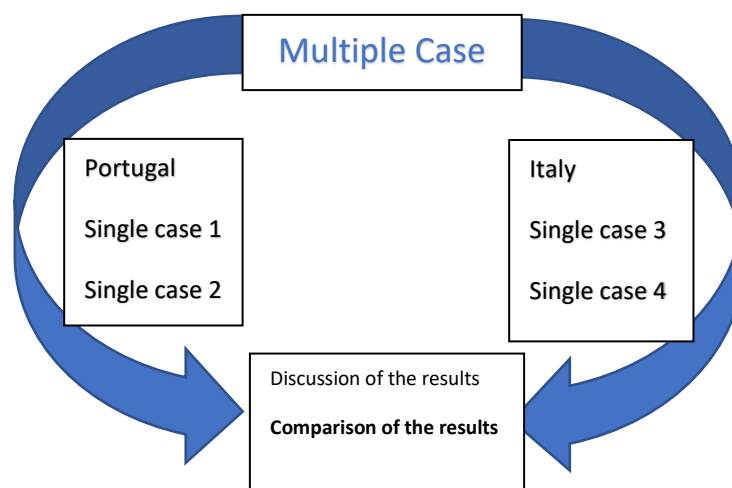

Figure 4: Research design- Multiple case study (Authors own, 2019)

After the first general picture of our multiple case study, we are going to present a second picture that can be interpreted as the model we followed to study each case.
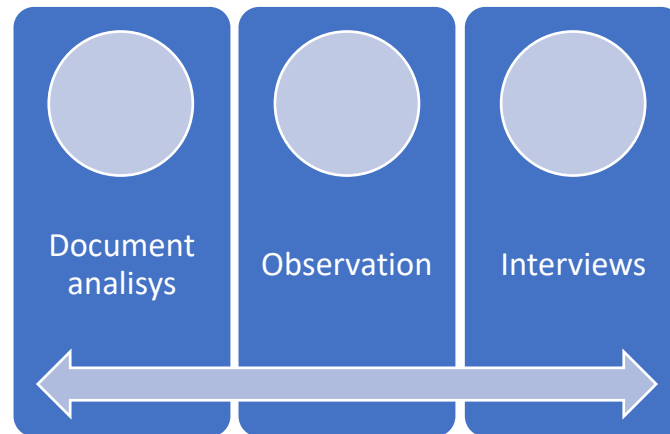

Figure 5: Research design- Model for the study of single case (Authors own, 2019)

As we can see by the previous picture our approach included, in a first phase, analysis of documents from the various texts made available by the U3A (members' cards, class calendar, regulations) and informal conversations (Bogdan & Biklen, 1994) with some key participants, in order to understand the origin of the educational context and its relevance to these individuals. These factors were fundamental to establish an informal relationship and to observe several situations in the U3A daily life. Non-participant observation was performed (Yin, 2002) at various moments and activities in the U3A. These observations took into account the type of activity, the physical space, the methodologies used, the human resources (who are the people in the situation and how they relate) and the materials (materials used and support). This information was collected from an observation grid and the respective field notes (Bogdan & Biklen, 1994). The observation was continuous since the first day in the field work, until the last one.

Finally, semi-structured interviews were conducted (Fontana & Frey, 1994) with several U3A participants: those who are directly linked to the history and evolution of the context, and have any kind of connection with the management, identified as "coordinator" or "director"; those who perform the figure of educator, called "educator"; and those who participate in the activities indicated as "learners".

In the next point we are going to stress some points regarding the research techniques we used (same of these same techniques were used in the exploratory phase of the research- Chapter 9.3).

9.6. Research techniques

Data collection techniques, used in research, are essential for its development. Pérez Serrano (1994) states that the method is the way, has a more global character, and the techniques are the art or the way to achieve it, they are more practical and operative. Among the many techniques available in the research, we intend to use documentary research and bibliographic research, participant and non-participant observation, informal conversations, questionnaire surveys and interviews. In this chapter we are going to explain each of them.

Document analysis

When starting an investigation, it is necessary to have a notion of what exists and for this can and should be done a documentary and a bibliographic research. Documentary research is "based on empirical evidence from the study of documents, such as those existing in official files or statistics" (Giddens, 2004, p. 707) or, as Sousa (2009) defines, has the objective of presenting the information "facilitating the understanding and acquisition of the maximum amount of pertinent information" (p. 262). Through documentary research, it is possible to access information that is not easily available, and which is essential to understand certain details of social reality (Ferreira & Carmo, 1998).

On the other hand, the literature search is a more or less intensive getting of information related to the object of study. This research is usually done in books, journals or scientific articles. We consider that these techniques are essential at the beginning of any research, since the researcher must first of all make a collection of the information that exists and the studies that have already been developed within the subject that he intends to study. Only after a brief knowledge of the theme and concepts can the researcher think about the problem and the design of his research.

In our specific case, the documentary research was important to get an idea of the type of studies have been developed in the U3A and education of old adults. We also consider that the

literature search was present throughout the process, since we obtained data or information that needed to be explored or explained from the theory.

Observation

In a social science research all observation is important, even if it does not have a structured or participant dimension. This technique aims to observe and establish data for further analysis (Bell, 1997). According to Quivy & Campenhoudt (2003), this technique is important to the extent that "it captures the behaviours at the moment they are produced" and allows the researcher to have a series of information that otherwise was not possible. When the observation is direct, the researcher assumes that the interest in the phenomenon is not purely historical but happens at the time of the investigation and has its own dynamics that are observed (Yin, 2002).

From the observation it is possible to observe the functioning, the dynamics, the interactions and the relationships that are established between the various participants. All the notes taken from these observations may be important to complement other data from the interviews, for instance, regarding the relationships that are established or the existing dynamics. For the observation we created a table with some points such as type of activity, physical space, methodology used, human resources and materials.

The questionnaire

Questionnaires are important in the sense that they make it easier to question a large number of people in a relatively short space of time (Quivy & Campenhoudt, 2003). This technique is based on a series of questions addressed to a set of individuals, which may be personal, social, economic, family, professional or opinion oriented, among others.

According to Almeida and Pinto (1995), the questionnaire is the most rigid and structured type of interview since the researcher uses a series of previously established and thought out questions. The same questions are asked to everyone in the same way and in the same order (Ghiglione & Matalon, 1997).

Once the first version of the questionnaire has been written, it is important to ensure that the questionnaire is suitable for its application and that it responds effectively to the research objectives. For this purpose, a set of verifications is elaborated, which is called pre-test (Ghiglione & Matalon, 1997). This pre-test is carried out on a small number of people or

institutions and allows verifying whether the questions are well prepared individually but also whether the questionnaire works as a whole.

According to the authors, although the pre-test does not guarantee the totality and certainty of the success of the questionnaire, it is undoubtedly an added value for its improvement (Ghiglione & Matalon, 1997).

Our questionnaire was used in the exploratory phase (chapter 9.3.) and it was important to have a general perspective about the field of old adult education and U3A in both countries. Moreover, from this questionnaire responses we get some outcomes to elaborate our research question.

Interview

The interview, as a data collection technique, allows us to obtain information about the subjects' representations, what people know, their knowledge, expectations and perceptions. According to Savoie- Zajc (2003), the interviews help to understand a certain reality or phenomenon through a verbal interaction between two or more people, who are involved in a relationship of equals. An interview is first of all a conversation in which knowledge and experiences are shared. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) define the interview as the "art" of asking questions and "knowing" how to listen to the answers.

In a qualitative research, interviews are also important since they " contribute to discover the aspects to be taken into account" and help to define the field of readings (Quivy & Campenhoudt, 2003, p. 69). According to these authors, the interview is perfectly complemented by reading and research theory.

The interview is not a neutral tool. It is linked to personal, material and technical conditions, and can therefore be influenced by the personal characteristics of the interviewer and the interviewee, by the physical space in which the interview is conducted and by the type of relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Savoie- Zajc, 2003).

Depending on the purpose of the research, researchers may opt for various types of interviews. These typologies vary depending on the degree of preparation and control by the researcher. According to several authors, the interview may be free, semi-directed and directed (Savoie- Zajc, 2003); non-directive, semi-directive and directive (Ghiglione & Matalon, 1997); or structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Bogdan & Biklen, 1994; Fontana & Frey, 1994). The structured interview is not flexible, it is very directed and structured; the semi-structured

interview has some degree of flexibility in the conduction of the interview, although there is a script the interviewer is free not to follow it completely and to deepen the subjects he considers more relevant; the unstructured interview allows the interviewee to talk openly about a certain subject, the researcher can go on resuming topics that he considers important so that they can be deepened.

Flexibility and freedom often create empathy and interaction between individuals (interviewer and interviewee), which leads to greater proximity and consequently more spontaneity on the part of the interviewee. This fact is important and may contribute to the emergence of new questions, which are essential for the research (Boni & Quaresma, 2005). From the interviews people can explain their reasons and their experience.

From the interviews we get the perceptions of the different individuals participating on U3A. Besides that it was the main instrument that allowed us to understand the history and the evolution of the contexts.

Another technical supports

During the research it was also important to consider other techniques and supports, such as informal conversations and the field diary. Informal conversations privilege informality, which allows establishing a mutual contact and a relationship with the people in question, without them feeling observed (Costa, 1989). For Ferrarotti (1985), informal conversations are interviews of a simpler, more informal scope that take place "in an informal manner, according to the circumstances and the persons interviewed, with the intention of establishing a dialogue, between the researcher and the object of investigation, which is absolutely indeterminate and in a position of total parity" (p. 115). These conversations will be held whenever an opportunity arises or is deemed necessary to clarify any doubts or seek relevant information.

The field diary also plays a key role in research. Although it is not a technique itself, this information medium is considered a form of registration resulting from various techniques, such as observation and informal conversations. Peretz (2000) speaks of observation notes and states that these result from what the observer sees and his relation to what he sees; this implies making choices at each moment of observation. For Peretz (2000), "the Observer must report the signs of the world studied, respecting the point of view of the people and limiting himself to proposing the mode of interpretation" (p. 127). In this sense, the field diary is marked by a set of notes that reflect the perception and selective presentation of the researcher (Flick, 2002)

in relation to what he observes both in interviews and in informal conversations or observations.

Informal observations and conversations were important in building meanings and obtaining information that otherwise was not possible. We intended to involve in this study all the individuals who somehow contribute to the educational practices of the U3A: from those responsible for defining the activities to the individuals who participate in these same activities.

9.7. Data processing and analysis

As data analysis techniques, we opted for SPSS and Excel software for the closed-ended questions in the exploratory survey (exploratory phase). The interviews and the remaining qualitative data were analysed from the categorical content analysis (Bardin, 1977).

With this research, we sought to understand how different cultural and social contexts (U3A), developing old adult education activities give learners outcomes that can respond to their needs. Data analysis includes all the information collected by the researcher during the research process (Patton, 1990). Content analysis is a set of techniques for the treatment of language materials" (Ghiglione & Matalon, 1997, p. 177). This allows for the organisation, selection and interpretation of the information collected through the different techniques and allows for the inference of the information (Sousa, 2009).

Content analysis can be considered as a social practice, in the sense that it seeks justifications and inferences regarding the data and the purpose of the research. According to Ghiglione and Matalon, (1997, p. 185), a content analysis "is meaningless if it is not goal-oriented". In the content analysis, the researcher seeks to go beyond what is expressed as direct communication, i.e. to find information that is hidden or the deeper content of that information (Sousa, 2009).

A content analysis includes processes such as categorisation and coding. From a data set it is possible to reach key elements and reach certain conclusions from the relationships that are established (Bodgan & Biklen, 1994).

Content analysis can be seen as a set of procedures that have a common goal: the production of a text that presents the data achieved during the investigation after this data has been transformed. This transformation occurs according to certain parameters and rules and must be justified by the researcher (Delgado & Gutiérrez, 1995).

With the analysis of the documents and other qualitative data was intended to understand the activities, taking into account their degree of formalisation, the ways of designing, developing and valuation of these practices and the dynamics of participation; it was intended to take into

account the relevance of educational practices for the contexts that promote them and for their participants (outcomes the participation brings to their lives).

The categories of the documentary analysis were defined a priori, namely on the basis of the indicators that allowed the construction of the questions included in the questionnaires, the interviews and the guidelines for observation; and a posteriori, based on the information provided by the respondents and as a result of the observation carried out. These allowed the analysis to be adapted to the data found during the study.

9.8. Triangulation and validity of the investigation

In qualitative research, it is important to bear in mind that validation cannot be spoken of, since both validity and reliability belong to positivism. According to Mishler (1990, cited in Sandín, 2010), "validation is the process (or processes) through which we make statements and assess the credibility of observations, interpretations and generalizations" (p. 194).

When we talk about validation in a qualitative research, we may face a contradiction. A study based on a qualitative methodology does not allow ensuring the validity of this study since "the criteria for this validity do not exist" (Olabuénaga, 1999, p. 78). In this sense, we can state that the level of validity of a case is not totally related to validity itself, but rather to its internal coherence. This research aimed to collect data that allowed us to know and understand the educational practices of the U3A and the importance of it for old adults; the use of various techniques in this study allowed for greater compliance and consistency in the data and overall conclusions.

Qualitative research presupposes the study of a reality that does not have only one version, since there are several subjective realities. If there are several realities, there will also be different interpretations of the same object, so it is not possible to speak of an interpretation that is correct. According to this logic, the validation of a qualitative research cannot assume the same assumptions from the traditional positivist perspective. Thus, Fragoso points out alternative perspectives of validation. According to these perspectives, validation is transformed and admits: that the same study may have several interpretations; verifying whether the interpretations are in accordance with the data and coherent with each other; and that validity can be ensured by comparing the results with other researchers or similar research (Fragoso, 2004).

In this sense, it is important that different sources are used to obtain answers to the same questions (Yin, 1997). It is in this context that the question of triangulation in an investigation

arises. Through data triangulation, multiple perspectives can be used to clarify meanings and verify whether an observation or interpretation is repeated (Stake, 1995).

According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), triangulation emerges as a strategy to rethink validity and should appear in an investigation. On the other hand, triangulation can work as a strategy to try to obviate the subjectivity of the researcher.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), there are four types of triangulation: data triangulation, in which data from different sources are compared; researcher triangulation, in which different interviewers/observers seek to detect deviations derived from the influence of the "researcher" factor in relation to the same theme; theoretical triangulation, data are considered from different theoretical perspectives and hypotheses; methodological triangulation, multiple "inter-methodological" combinations are applied and the results obtained are compared to analyse coincidences and differences. Bisquerra (1989) also speaks of multiple triangulation. In this study, multiple triangulation was used, since data, researchers, theory and various methodologies were triangulated.

10. Case Studies Presentation

Given the indications and criteria presented in the previous chapters (Research context and Exploratory phase; Research context and Exploratory phase) four different cases were selected (two in Portugal and two in Italy. As we said in the previous chapter the main criteria for the selection of the cases were educative aim, educative approach and methodology used. These four studies constituted the cases that gave the body to our research. Through a conversation with each U3A we came to the conclusion that it would be convenient for the entity if the name of the institution was revealed. As a result of this decision, but to keep in attention the confidential and ethical issue, we decided to reveal the context maintaining the anonymity of the participants. Also, having in consideration that all the context are different we decided to give them a particular name, based in the specifies and characteristics that we found.

1. *Case 1: TKM-Universidade Sénior Dom Sancho I* (that we called as Culture University because of the diversity of educational offer and visits). This university is situated in the centre of Portugal (in a city with approximately 175 000 inhabitants). It started in 2013, created by a group of friends. Up to this date it counts more than 1000 learners (aged 31 to over 80, and from all social classes and academic degrees) and more than 70 different courses. This University is based in an association and is self-sustainable. To conduct this study, we led nonparticipant observation for two weeks and we did 20 interviews to different members in the university. We identified more than 50 publications of the university, an official recognition as a service for the community, awards and trophies- from competitions of poetry and creative writing. Also, interesting is the fact that this U3A "never closes its doors". During the summer months, when there are no courses, the university still offers several cultural opportunities, e.g. field visits at national and international level.

2. *Case 2: Academia Sénior Monet Oblectando* (that we called as Social University, because of the high attention and care given to the learners), is situated in the south of Portugal (in a city with approximately 65 000 inhabitants). This U3A is an educational project of the Red Cross and is for everyone; the fee of inscription changes depending the economic situation of the learner. It was created in 2013 and counts 100 learners and 25 different courses. To conduct this study, we led nonparticipant observation for two weeks and 12 interviews to different members in the university and we were present

in the Christmas party. We want to highlight the Academy report "Read me" produced by the Writing workshop and the pioneer project "Lethes Go Caffe" that was happening in the moment of our study- based in the internship project of a social educator, aimed to create a space of proximity, sharing of knowledge and experiences.

3. *Case 3: Libera Università per adulti e anziani* (that we called as Research University, because of the years they dedicated to the research, debates and conferences), is situated in the centre north of Italy (in a city with approximately 390 000 inhabitants). This U3A appeared in 1981 with the aim of offering the people a reason for social participation, meeting and dialogue and a serene and formative cultural activity. Based in a catholic association, its logo: "Fides et scientia" (faith and science) reveals its main concerns and the focus of the context. It has 240 participants and a total of 44 courses. They give huge importance to conferences, offering at least two conferences a week. To conduct this study, and because they had overlapping lessons, we led nonparticipant observation for approximately one month and 12 interviews. Here, we highlight the high fee for participate in the global course (basically conferences) and the extra fee for any further specific course (e.g. laboratories of arts or languages). Interesting seems also the fact this U3A has volunteering staff with the role of RP (Public Relations): receives the persons and is the mediator between adults and the university.

4. *Case 4: Nuova Università Atestina dell' Età Libera* (that we called as Community University, because it is the project of the municipality to cater the educational and social needs of the elderly in their community). It is situated in the centre north of Italy (17 000 inhabitants). This U3A appeared in 1995 as a response of the municipality to the city. Up to this date it counts 260 participants (this is their limit given the available structure and limit of lessons). To conduct this study, and because the minor number of lessons for week we led nonparticipant observation for approximately one month and we conducted 12 interviews. Its structure stands out because they are divided in 3 parts (2 months each), being the second one marked by the laboratories (e.g. languages and theatre). The first and the last parts are mainly directed to frontal conferences. We highlight that one afternoon a week they receive a local personality of companies from the city, going there to talk about their work. Also, learners are coming from more than 20 different surrounding cities. Otherwise, some learners would like to have more time for laboratories (little groups) and less time for conferences.

As we already highlight all the cases are different in matter of context of support, organization, structure and activities. In this sense, although using the same general design of research we decided to adapt the research design taking into consideration the specificity of each of the contexts.

In the next chapters we will contextualize and present each one of the cases.

10.1. The Case of the Culture University

This study was carried out during the month of November 2017. For this study we conducted two weeks of observation in the context, from 9:00 to 19:00. After the first week of observation and consequently some contact with adults we started to individualise some key persons to interview. We conducted a total of 20 interviews to different individuals. Being them part of the administration board, educators or learners. In some cases, the same person can have different roles, as we can see by the following table 1.

Case 1	Age	Male/woman	Role on U3A		
			Administrative	**Educator**	**Learner**
1	68	Male			Yes
2	60	Woman			Yes
3	65	Male		Yes	Yes
4	62	Woman			Yes
5	26	Male		Yes	
6	66	Woman	Yes (Coordinator)		Yes
7	70	Woman			Yes
8	70	Woman			Yes
9	65	Woman			Yes
10	61	Male		Yes	Yes
11	70	Male	Yes (Presidente).		Yes
12	64	Woman		Yes	Yes
13	69	Woman	Yes		Yes
14	71	Woman			Yes
15	68	Woman	Yes		Yes
16	74	Woman			Yes
17	71	Male		Yes	

18	70	Male	Yes	Yes	Yes
19	72	Woman	Yes		Yes
20	72	Woman			Yes

Table 2: Respondents distributed by age, gender and role at the university

From the table, is possible to see that in general, the participants of the U3A are young (more than half have less than 70 years old in the moment of the study). From the other side is possible to verify that 10 from the 20 interviews' have at least a double role in the university. It means that the same person can have an administrative role and to be a learner or an educator at the same time.

We also consulted the regulation of the University, such as the 50 publications they did in their Journal called "Povoador".
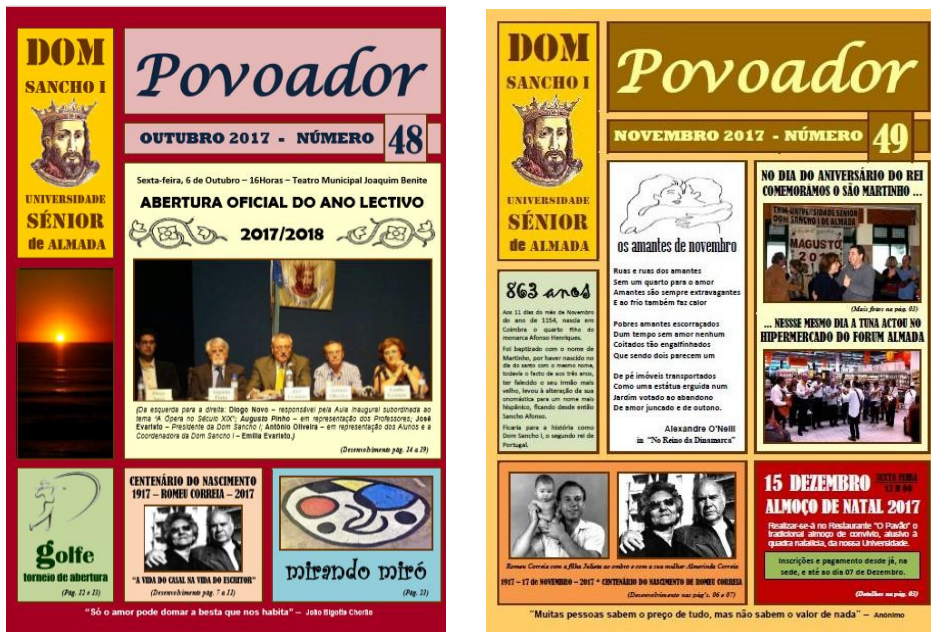

Figure 6: Examples of the front page of Povoador (journal of the U3A)

Organization, Resources and Structure

The University of Culture was created by a group of nine friends. Initially this group was in another U3A of the municipality. Later, for various reasons, these friends got together and

decided to create a new U3A, with which they could identify and meet their expectations. The main idea was to create an alternative for the older people of the region: a University that was independent, autonomous and self-sustaining from a financial and political point of view. They get together and started to work, formed an association from which the university emerged.

After an initial organizational moment, the snowball effect began to call friends and neighbours. This University opened its doors for the first time in September 2013 with a total of 500 participants and 40 different disciplines. By the end of the same year, there were already a total of 1000 participants.

In terms of resources, this has been an easily solved problem. As soon as they found a space to function as a main office, the necessary equipment appeared: "...another group went in search of furniture, and managed... he was a banker and managed to get the first desks, the first computers, the first chairs, and we had all that" [Coordinator, woman, 66 years].

The social bodies are only composed of nine elements. 3 at the board of directors, 3 at the supervisory board, 3 at the meeting table.

According to the Regulations, the main objectives of the university are:

1.   To offer the learners a space that is socially organized and appropriate for their ages, so that they can live according to their personality and their social relationship.

2.   To provide learners with the opportunity to attend classes where their knowledge can be disseminated, valued and expanded.

3.   Develop activities promoted for and by learners.

4.   Create meeting spaces in the community that take incentives and stimulate a healthy spirit of coexistence and human and social solidarity.

5.   Disseminate and preserve our history, culture, traditions and values.

6.   Encourage and support social volunteering.

The identity of the U3A is also highlighted, marked by various symbols: the logo, the flag, identification badges and the hymn (written and musiced by the learners). Moreover, the main symbol is Dom Sancho I, that was the second king of Portugal and it was he who gave the first charter to the city. It was 1190. For this reason, he was called the "Povoador" [populator]. Following this line, the mainboard of this U3A searching a name that could bring the

identification of the people decided to call Dom Sancho I to the university. A second significant reason was that they also wanted to "populate" the city for learning, knowledge, fun, entertainment and much affection (Povoador Zero, p. 1).

Figure 7: Photo of the main office and logo of the U3A

These symbols identify the University and are used in various situations. The sense of belonging that derives from these identity symbols seems to be one of the reasons for the success of the U3A, since the older people feel part of something, they feel they belong to something bigger: "We, when we go for our walks, we carry a flag. Our flag! We carry our badges, our badges. We are all identified is the feeling of belonging ..." [Coordinator, woman, 66 years old].

This U3A is autonomous and subsists exclusively of the registration fees of the participants. This fee varies according to the number of courses in which they are enrolled. Not receiving funding from other entities gives the U3A the privilege of presenting itself as a free organization and of not suffering any kind of political, religious or other pressure.

The monthly fee has the value of:

a) One subject: 5,00 (five) euros per month, that is, 40,00 (forty) euros per year;

b) two subjects: EUR 9,00 (nine euros) per month, i.e, 72,00 (seventy-two) euros per year;

c) three subjects: EUR 12,00 (twelve) per month, i.e. EUR 96,00 (ninety-six) per year. year

d) Four subjects: 14.00 (fourteen) euros per month, i.e. 112.00 (one hundred and twelve). per year;

e) Five subjects: 16,00 (sixteen) euros per month, i.e. 128,00 (one hundred and twenty-eight). per year;

f) From five disciplines: plus 1,00 (one) euro per each, per month, that is, EUR 8.00 (eight) per year.

Besides the monthly fee, the individuals need to pay a single admission fee and a student card of 25.00 (twenty-five) euros. This amount is paid only once and is not repeated in subsequent years. For last, the school personal accident insurance of EUR 6.50, which is updated annually (Intern regulation).

Today this U3A is one of the biggest in Portugal and counts with several awards and distinctions.

The activities are developed in the head office, but they use another facilities, such as

(a) Own installations (four different spaces);

(b) schools;

(c) other premises assigned for this purpose (swimming pool, golf filed, ecc.).

Educational project and activities

Regarding the educational project, and according to the interviews, we found that this U3A has a flexible project, not completely defined a priori, follows a non-formal perspective, uses horizontal work methodologies and enhances several moments of recreational and cultural activities. The activities are organized into two major categories: courses and cultural activities. In the year of the study the U3A has 70 different courses.

In the first category, we can find several aspects, described by the Coordinator as: 1. stage arts (dances, theatre, poetry); 2. manual arts (paintings, drawing, ceramics); 3. cognitive development (languages, stories, sociology, psychology).

Regarding the second category - cultural activities - there are conferences organized by guests, lunches, trips (inside or outside the country), various exhibitions and thematic parties such as, for example, the Christmas party. Very particular is the fact that this University offers an end-

of-year party. This celebration was created with the aim of creating a moment of conviviality for the old people who are alone at home on the last day of the year. In practice, it is a shared dinner, where people are together, eat and have fun.

The classes of U3A are held from Mondays to Friday from 10h00 to 20h00. The remaining activities can take place throughout the week at times to be agreed upon, with the learners and during periods of interruption of classes.

Regarding our data we can see that the university have a big diversity of educative offer, as expressed by one of our interviewers:

> D. Sancho is a university with an extraordinary offer! I had to combine everything, because I thought: "A lot and I'm not going to do anything, I'm going to disperse". I like history very much, I like the Choir very much and Ceramics was influenced by my husband (smiles) for seeing me do manual labor and these things I came. [Learner, woman, 70 years old]

Furthermore, having in consideration the participants in our research, is possible to see the preferences in some disciplines such as: musical theatre, cavaquinho, choir, Tuna, Fado, and dances (different types) that are related with stage arts; in languages such as French, Mandarin, and English, being the bigger interest in the English; manual arts such as lace and embroider, other workmanships, sewing, tissue painting and ceramics. Also, a significate group is interested in histories: history of masonry, history of art and patrimony. Other activities chosen by our participants are tai chi, yoga, maintenance and wellness exercises, international relations and creative writing.

Another highlight of this U3A is the fact that it "doesn't close doors". This means that the courses, like other universities in the country, are open from October to June, but during the summer months, when the main office is closed, there is the possibility of participating in various leisure and cultural trips. In addition to domestic trips, there are also trips abroad: "this year we have three big trips, to Russia, Norway and Croatia" (Coordinator, woman, 66 years old).

Regarding the evaluation process made from the different figures we can say that it is different according to each individual and his role in the U3A.

The direction looks to have a concern to be present. They try to follow the lessons and to evaluate the environment from times to times, the coordinator does some punctual meeting to

understand the situation between participants, and in the end of the year a satisfaction survey is done:

> One of the ideas we have every year is ... for now because we are in the field, in the field. And we try to know how things are, we attend classes and all that, but on the other hand there's also a way to evaluate that is for example if a teacher enters with 20 students and the following month has 10 and so on and so forth and something goes wrong in the kingdom of Denmark and we have to understand what it is, well. But in general we have a great teachers there, good teachers, excellent teachers who have put on the Dom Sancho t-shirt and who are ready to move forward. [President, man, 70 years old]

> With the teachers I do. In May we have a general meeting, in which I have a sheet of paper, where I distribute a survey, and then they do a little self-assessment and make proposals for the following year. Deep down, it's a more general thing. [Coordinator, woman, 66 years old]

> No, I do some evaluations. So that are of the activities, for example that we go abroad, when we go abroad, I have a survey (…) I do a satisfaction survey of students. As for the classroom assessment I do not do. I don't do it formally, I end up doing it informally, because I always end up knowing what's going on here and there and I try to correct the things that are going less well. [Coordinator, woman, 66 years old].

The educators base their evaluation practically in informal conversations. They are not worried with formal evaluations at all.

> No, I don't have that concern. This is the most free, it is the most... because I look at them and I see myself. Why am I here? I'm here to keep my cognitive abilities alive so they're also here for the same reason, so I don't send them anything to do at home, I don't send them anything to study to bring the next day or the next week as there are many disciplines they do. (…) my students don't have it, it's in class that they learn, it's in class that they put their doubts and I understand when they have doubts. When I realize that they have doubts then I have to find a method to get around and make sure that the doubt is cleared up. I'm not waiting for him to put me in doubt because I see it in their faces. [Educator, man, 70 years old].

> So, I always ask, we evaluate at the end of the period, what did you think, what did you not think. At the moment I'm even changing (...) I made the projection of a film, and then I asked them to send me an e-mail about what they thought about the classes of this change, if it got better, if it got worse, and therefore I think it has to be this, this exchange that results, therefore, if it is a success for the discipline. [Educator, man, 61 years old]

We can see that the evaluation is not a real formal concern. All the subjects with some kind of responsibility, administration or educators, have their methods of valuation of the work, that are mainly based in informal valuation made during the year.

The participants

The participants are divided in two main groups that are not incompatible between them: the learners and the educators.

The learners (approximately 1300) are aged between 31 and over 80 years. The majority (70%) are female (although some disciplines rely almost exclusively on male individuals, such as Golf and Naval Art). Diversified is also the level of education of the aged: many of them have a secondary level, but it is possible to find some older adults who never went to school or some with a university course.

This U3A has 65 educator, all volunteers. The ages of the educators are between 26 and 80 years old; 60% are female and 40% male. Regarding the level of studies, educators vary from primary school to doctorate. Some of the educators are retired or unemployed, but most of them still have a job. An interesting fact (both from interviews and observations) is that some of the educators (mainly among the unemployed and retired) are also attending this university as learners.

The coordinator distinguishes the participants in two groups: i) the people who "just come, come, sit down, listen to everything that is to hear and when the lesson is over they leave"; and ii) "the people who come with the purpose of learning, and who take the worksheets home, and who read everything! And that study to. And then they want to discuss this detail with the teacher or the other." [Coordinator, woman, 66 years old].

Reasons of participation on U3A

The reasons that bring people to these universities seems to be varied and to be related to the person's life experience (positive and negative aspects). This category emerged *a posteriori* from the information provided in the interviews namely by the questions "Why did you have an interest in looking for this university?; What were your motives?; What activity do you participate in? Why?".

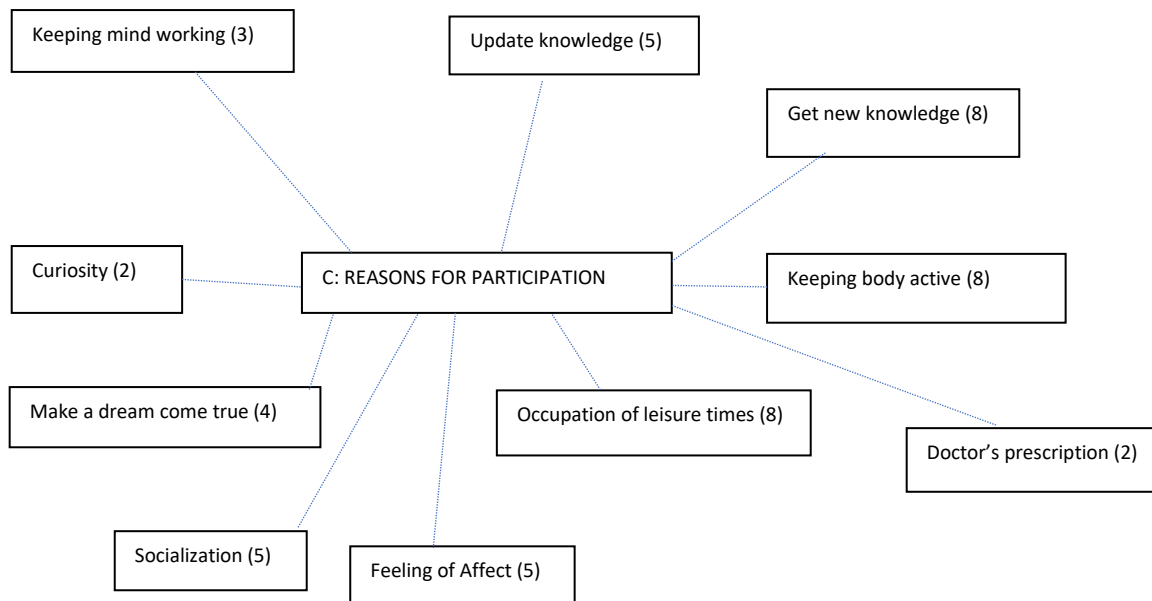In the following graphic is possible to see the main reasons of participation (from our 20 respondents):

Keeping mind working (3)

Update knowledge (5)

Get new knowledge (8)

Curiosity (2)

C: REASONS FOR PARTICIPATION

Keeping body active (8)

Make a dream come true (4)

Occupation of leisure times (8)

Doctor's prescription (2)

Socialization (5)

Feeling of Affect (5)

Figure 8: Reasons for participation on U3A[2]

The general motives are the "occupation of leisure time" and "keeping the body active" and "get new knowledge". In some cases, it is the doctors themselves who "prescribe the U3A" to their patients: "...the doctors themselves come here to see which disciplines their patients should enrol in, several! They come here, ask me for the list of activities and take (...) they send their patients here and they come to become our students (Coordinator, woman, 66 years old). In these cases, the work developed by the U3A is a real weapon against aging and social exclusion (Formosa, 2014) or a means to prevent diseases related to age and loneliness (Pocinho, 2014).

From the different techniques used (informal conversations, interviews, and observation) it was possible to understand that among the participants in the U3A it is possible to find:

1.   People looking for an activity similar to that performed in their profession (e.g. teachers who do creative writing);

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[2] The image represents the reasons for participation in U3A, presenting the code and the different associated categories. The number corresponds to the interviews in which this reason occurred.

2.   Participants who seek to carry out practices in a different field from their job (e.g. nurses who take courses in sewing and embroidery);

3.   Participants who seek to make a childhood or youth dream come true, who for economic and/or political reasons did not have the possibility to achieve it:

> And I asked my mother and father, I had my five (...) but in Vila, at the time the girls were not going to learn music (...) And then I couldn't learn music. In such a way that I cried so much, so much, so much, that I wanted to leave my land. (...) and now after I became an old woman I thought: 'I'm still going to learn something! I'm still going to learn something' and how the chance to come here for music came up [Learner, woman, 71 years old].

> I already had a little knowledge of things, too. It is obvious that this is born with us and then I still lived a little bit in this life and then I left because that life didn't work out for many different reasons. [Learner, male, 68 years old]

4.   People who have never had the chance to study or immigrants who want to learn Portuguese (in the case of "Learn Portuguese" or "Portuguese for foreigners" courses). The U3A seems to be a valid answer in educational terms, it is a basic service, but also an open service to the community.

> Others than for example for foreign language learning. We have foreigners there. At this moment I remember, Americans, Brazilians, Latvians and therefore are sometimes younger. For example, we have a student there now, the Mercedes have 39 years old and is learning Portuguese. She speaks Russian well, speaks English well, speaks other languages well and Portuguese is learning. But then the experience is good in that respect. [President, male, 70 years old]

5.   Younger participants (in some cases unemployed in other employees with seasonal jobs, such as flight hostesses) who seek the U3A as a way to update and acquire new knowledge.

From this data we could verify that this seems not a closed U3A. It receives the various people who need knowledge and have interest in its activities; it has a very diverse educational offer; it listens to its participants; it works in partnership with the people and with the community itself (Sanz Fernández, 2016).

The older people are free to participate in the various activities, they can choose the courses and activities in which they participate. In addition, they are largely responsible for and involved in the promotion and organisation of some activities. At the beginning of each year a small group is elected, with the representatives of each course, and this is called the *ad hoc* group. This group, in addition to functions related to the organisation of activities (meetings, lunches, parties), has the responsibility of being the bridge between the administration and the other colleagues:

> The ad hoc group is a group of class representatives, that is to say, each class has a representative to make the connection to the organization D. Sancho and after this large fan it is elected a group to handle the Christmas party, the end of the school year party. Essentially it is a group with this objective and the Magusto. The Magusto officially would be the last task that we would do. During the year, whenever there is a need and the organization finds it, it can ask us to collaborate punctually on more things. It's interesting, because we are helping to organize these events for our colleagues. We do the decorating, we do all those things that it is usual to do at these events. This is essentially what the group does. [Learner, woman, 70 years old].

In some activities the programs are previously made and passed to the coordinator, in other cases the individuals have the possibility to build the programs with the educators

> My posture is as light as possible, transmitting knowledge. And there was once a student who asked me if I had a program, and I said, "I have a program and I will give it to you, now don't come and complain if I don't fulfil the program, that I rarely fulfil the program. I mean, I have a line, part, ... begins with political science, it was the first thing ... were the first classes, now I'll start in the fun part, next week I'll talk about what is Portugal. People don't know what Portugal is… [Educator, male, 71 years old]

Another interesting point is that the majority of the educators, used to deal with students in school take in consideration that this is a different reality and these adults have different perspectives and needs regarding the traditional students of school.

> Yes, I had, I had last year a very vocational program in the area of singing which is my formation (…) so I didn't know what the dynamics of the University were, I didn't know if we had to take some kind of exam (...) then I realised that it wouldn't work because it's over there, people aren't machines, right? And the adaptation of that to the reality of the

lesson wouldn't be a good dynamic and so I looked for another way, therefore for another aspect … [Educator, male, 26 years old]

One of the aspects that seems to be basilar in this case is the dynamic that is created during the processes of learning. Is possible to note a strong dynamic educator-learner. Being a context predominantly of old persons is possible to find a particular richness of individuals and experiences of life. The older people, by sharing their personal and professional experiences, seems to contribute significantly to the activities: "We learn from each other!"; "my idea is not to exhaust the issues, but to raise questions...then those who want (because they are free in my classes) can debate with me or research at home" (Educator, male, 71 years old). This dynamic is so strong that sometimes the educator decides to sit down and lets the learner continue (giving himself an inversion of roles). In other cases it is the educators who encourage this sharing, proposing challenges:

> I had a program in class that was "three minutes of fame," so everyone had to present a theme with beginning, middle and end. And they had three minutes to do it. And there's a lady who says, "I don't... teacher I don't know how to say anything", "You don't know anything? So what have you lived through so far?", "Oh I was a modist" (...) "So that's what you're going to do, you're going to teach the class, how to make a dress" (...) Look, it was a success... [Educator, man, 71 years old]

This U3A has the particularity of having a project that gives importance to relationships and closeness with the community. The administration defines the U3A as an innovative space for adult education and a meeting point for everyone: "I think most people like to be here. We are always more" (Educator, man, 68 years old); "The senior university for me, represents a way to occupy free time...here I have the goal of keeping the cognitive functioning and social relations"; "...here we can look for knowledge, social contact, physical activity...then people look for this place" (Educator, man, 70 years old).

Although this U3A does not have a bar or a space for socialising, this does not seem to be a problem. In fact, this represents the perfect reason why people are also outside the U3A structure. The older meet before or after the activities and look for other spaces to be together: "We'll have a snack, before we go to university we'll have a snack. Even in the summer, on Saturday, if possible, we are talking. The conversations are very open, that's what I like." (Learner, woman, 60 years old); "We go for a snack or drink together, and occasionally, we meet up to have lunch" (Learner, man, 68 years old).

Impacts of participation

Participation in U3A educational practices seems to have different impacts in the individuals that participate in it.
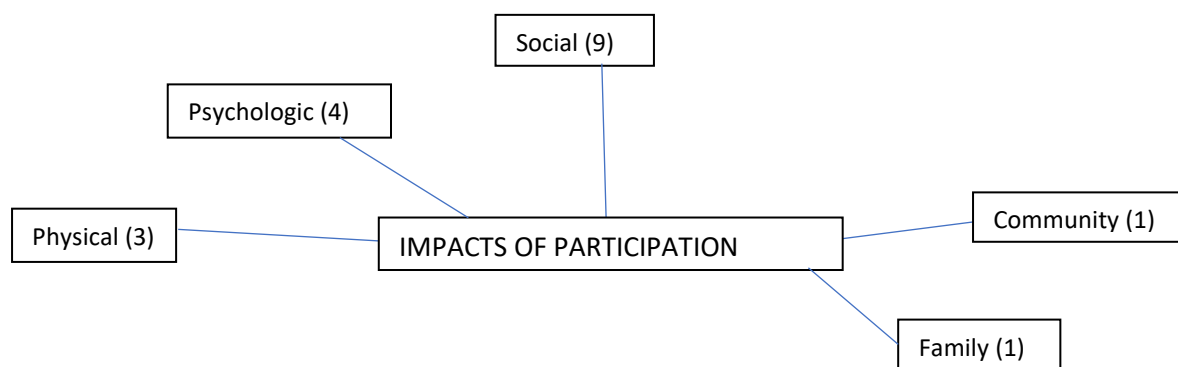

Figure 9: Impacts of socialization

In social aspect, people create groups "we are known as the troika" [Learner, woman, 71 years old]; "...this is my family" (Learner, woman, 76 years old).

Additionally, it favours the relationships between grandparents and grandchildren, who can help grandchildren to study and debate about history or geography. Showing to have impacts also in the relations with family;

Relations with the community itself: "[Mandarin course] And since we already have many Chinese people, and I already go there to a grocery store or to the fruit and vegetables that are Chinese, and I talk to Maria" (Learner, woman, 71 years).

Furthermore, this U3A constitutes a small community and establishes links with the wider community. Some of its activities are open (and free) to the whole community; it has different agreements and protocols with various institutions (golf course, spa, theatre, local schools); whenever necessary it functions as a voluntary group for social assistance (during the year they perform several times in hospitals and associations); they collaborate with the forces of the law and respond to initiatives of the municipality.

10.2. The case of the Social University

Our second case was developed in a University of Third Age (U3A) located in the south of Portugal. It was founded in 2013 and is an educational project of a Portuguese Red Cross (CVP) supported, in order to provide educational and social activities for older adults in the municipality and promote their quality of life. As stated by the project director, the objective of this U3A "is to share their lives, to share their knowledge, to have moments of citizenship and social interaction, and essentially to remain active, cognitive stimulation, learning, and knowledge are ways for them to remain active, both physically and psychologically" (Director, woman, 32 years old).

This study was conducted during the month of December 2017. For this study we conducted two weeks of observation in the context, from 9:00 to 18:00. After the first week of observation and consequently some contact with adults we started to individualise some key persons to interview. We conducted a total of 12 interviews to the individuals. Being them part of the administration board, educators or learners. In some cases, the same person can have different roles, as we can see by the following table 2.

Case 2	Age	Male/woman	Role on U3A		
			Administrative	**Educator**	**Learner**
1	32	Woman	Yes (Director)		
2	39	Woman		Yes	
3	72	Male			Yes
4	39	Woman	Trainee		
5	62	Woman			Yes
6	74	Woman			Yes
7	73	Male			Yes
8	69	Male			Yes
9	64	Woman			Yes
10	87	Woman			Yes
11	81	Woman		Yes	Yes
12	69	Woman		Yes	Yes

Table 3: Respondents distributed by age, gender and role at the university

Contextual framework of the Red Cross (CVP)

The Portuguese Red Cross has been assuming an increasingly important role in the area of Support for the Older and Dependent, in order to respond to the needs of the people, increasing and consequently demands of the aging of the population. In view of this trend, this project stands to keep the seniors active, physical and mentally, encouraging their valorisation and integration into society and privileging their inclusion in society (Faro/Loulé, 2018).

One of the axes of action of the Delegation of the Red Cross Faro/Loulé is precisely Old and Dependent people, with the Senior Academy, called as Monet Oblectando. This Academy exists since 2012/13, having started with a total of 8 disciplines and 37 learners. With this project the CVP aims to provide the senior population with the sharing of knowledge, promote the interpersonal relationship, to promote the exercise of full citizenship, contributing to for active ageing and quality of life (Portuguese Red Cross, 2018).

The Portuguese Red Cross is one of the 189 National Societies that integrate the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Founded by José António Marques, the Portuguese Red Cross, forward designated as the CVP, started its activity in 1865 with the designation of "Provisional Commission for Relief and Wounded and Sick in Time of War."

Throughout the years, the Portuguese Red Cross, within the framework of its International Movement, has been acting in emerging scenarios of armed conflicts and/or natural disasters and catastrophes, both on national and international territory. On a daily basis, this Institution seeks to provide humanitarian and social assistance, and in particular to the most vulnerable groups - the older generation, the dependent population, children and victims of violence, poor, immigrants, homeless, drug addicts, inmates and people with disabilities, among others (CVP, 2018). At the same time, the Portuguese Red Cross develops its activity through the provision of services and the development of areas such as health; prevention and Emergency Preparedness; Training and Entrepreneurship; Vocational Education; Higher Education of Health; Teaching of First Assistance; Education for Health; Cooperation and dissemination of International Humanitarian Law (CVP, 2018).

The CVP is a non-governmental organisation (NGO), of a voluntary nature and of public interest, which carries out its activity with the appropriate support of the State, respect for International Humanitarian Law, the Statutes of the International Movement, the Constitution of the Federation of the Red Cross and the Crescent Red. Fiscally, it is a legal person of private

law and public utility, not-for-profit, with full legal capacity for the pursuit of the aims and whose mission is to provide humanitarian and social assistance to different vulnerable groups, preventing and contributing to the defence of life, health and dignity human (CVP, 2007).

This organisation is implemented at national level and his mission is to provide humanitarian and social assistance - especially for the most vulnerable - preventing and repairing suffering, and contributing to the defence of life, health and human dignity. The Delegation of Faro of Red Cross has as its mission the promotion of the social development of the community, through the provision of services, and acts in accordance with the Fundamental Principles: Humanity, Impartiality, Independence, Neutrality, Volunteering, Unity and Universality (CVP, Statutes of the Portuguese Red Cross, 2007).

The Faro/Loulé Delegation is one of the 170 delegations that integrate the CVP and is organized in two operational sectors: The Emergency Unit and the Social Action Sector:

Emergency Unit: the Emergency Unit mission is to intervene in situations of catastrophe and relief from human suffering, ensuring the minimisation of loss of life. It is oriented to comply with relief missions, assistance, treatment of the sick and injured, transport and relief. Provides rescue and rescue services, emergency and recovery services and transport of patients. These services are directed to the general community.

Social Action Sector: The Social Action Sector team works within the framework of structural intervention in different social contexts, in particular economically and socially weak and/or vulnerable groups, through strategic axes that offer answers to psychosocial needs identified at the local level (Faro/Loulé, 2018).

The social action sector develops works in ten action axes with answers and specific projects:

Axis 1- Vulnerable Groups;

Axis 2- Psychosocial Support;

Axis 3 - Projects: "Revive, Portugal Mais Feliz, Aproximar";

Axis 4 - Training and Awareness Actions;

Axis 5 - Children and Youth: Small Recruits Junior Academy;

Axis 6 - Older People and Dependents: Senior Academy Monet Oblectando

Axis 7 - Youth CVP;

Axis 8 - Volunteering;

Axis 9 - Fundraising;

Axis 10 - S.A.D.- Home Support Service. (Faro/Loulé, 2018)

Organization and resources of the U3A

The U3A correspond to the Axis 6- Older People and Dependents. *The Senior Academy Monet Oblectando* is a response to the needs felt in this axis and is operating in facilities provided by CVP.

Figure 10: Logo of the U3A

The fact this is a CVP project makes it a little different from other U3A, since, besides the educational and cultural part, it is possible to reconcile it with other services of the non-governmental organization, such as, psychology laboratory, the teleassistance services, among others.

According the responsible for the project, the aim of this U3A is:

> … that these people leave home, that they are not alone at home watching *Goucha* [tv show] and watching the afternoon programmes on television; it is sharing their lives, it is sharing knowledge, having moments of citizenship, and being together; and essentially staying active. Cognitive stimulation, learning and knowledge are ways for them to remain active, both physically and psychologically. It's good, the interaction with others is halfway, because many of these women, if they weren't here, were alone, because sometimes the children aren't here, because they emigrated or because other things, have the support of their grandchildren but then there's nothing that belongs to them, and this space... for me these are the goals, it's sharing knowledge, it's breaking with isolation, and giving them space to continue being people, without being at work,

as they were a whole life, and being themselves, and that's essentially it. [Director, woman, 32 years old]

Regarding the financing of the U3A a monthly fee is required. This fee is fixed in the sense it doesn't change concerning the number of disciplines that individuals attend. Furthermore, a minimum attendance is required, but there is no maximum number to attend:

It's fixed. Regardless of the number of subjects they attend, it is a monthly fee. However, we ask for the minimum attendance of two subjects, just so we can have some structure, but there is no limit to the number of subjects to attend. [Director, woman, 32 years old]

On the other hand, we can say that this university is inclusive and accessible to all financially. If situations are detected in which people are unable to pay the fee, it is reduced or in certain (extreme) situations people are even exempt from this payment: "When we detect situations of people who are unable to pay for it, a request is made for the monthly fee to be reduced or even not paid at all" [Director, woman, 32 years old]. The important thing is that people do not stop participating for this reason. From our data (observations and interviews) and having in consideration that is supported by the CVP it can be said that the participation and well-being of older adults seem to be priorities in this context.

Educational practices and activities

Operating annually, between October and June, this U3A began in 2012/13, with a total of 8 disciplines and 37 learners, but now it counts with more than 150 participants and a total of 25 disciplines and workshops.

The calendar and the choice of disciplines were made in group work, started with the team that launched the project, but later complemented with the people who attended the U3A. The educators' own choice was also made based on informal conversations and contacts of those who were already participating in the context.

U3A activities are divided into disciplines and workshops.

- The disciplines (taken in the classroom) are Foreign Languages - English (initiation and conversation), French (conversation) and Spanish (conversation), Informatics (initiation, intermediate and advanced) Citizenship and Current World, Psychology, Choir Singing Group, Rhythmic Dance and Gymnastics, Gymnastics and Fitness, Yoga

and Meditation, Poetry Tertullian, The Meeting of Happiness, Commented Hearings of Classical Music and Reflexology.

- The workshops are related to more open and informal practices such as: Porcelain Painting, Painting (Canvas, Wood and Fabric), Creative Recycling, Theatre, Creative Writing, Sewing and Workmanship and Initiation to Guitar.

The older people are free to participate in the various activities, being able to choose the courses and activities they want. In addition, they are the main responsible for, and involved in the promotion and organization of some activities, such as the Academy Journal "Read Me", produced by the academics of the Creative Writing Workshop, which publishes the U3A trimestral activity.

Besides the disciplines and workshops, the responsible for the U3A try to develop always more activities, involving the students such as punctual workshops, little tours and thematic parties:

> (…) we do a collection of themes, or people come along offering themselves or we meet someone and we suggest "ah would you like to go there to our academy to talk about a certain theme?", and workshops have always been, we've tried several ways. There was a year, in the second year I think, on Friday there were no classes, it was a workshop day, and there were always different activities on Friday, and we used to do that on different occasions. We do workshops, we start doing tours recently, we do thematic parties throughout the year: Christmas party, Carnival party, end of the year party with presentation of the works. [Director, woman, 32 years old]

One of the great highlights of this academic year (2017/2018), and also one of the innovations of the U3A, was the project "Lethes Go Caffe". This was a project of an internship of Social Education whose first objective was to promote active ageing (going to be presented in the next point).

Regarding the evaluation process in the U3A made from the different figures (direction and educators) we can say that it diverges according each individual and his role in the U3A.

The direction seems to pay attention to the need of a constant valuation and during the year do at least three formal meetings with the professors in matter to understand how is going the situation and if there are aspects to improve:

Yes, we always try to have at least three meetings of teachers a year. The first, the first meeting before the start of the year, for the scheduling, to listen to the teachers' expectations, for them to say a little bit about what they would like to do this year. It's not so strict that they have to bring a programme, no, they have freedom to do it (…)

(…) at the beginning of the second period I schedule a second meeting with the teachers to do an intermediary evaluation: how is it going, what is going less well, what is going better, what do they feel is missing, what can I help, what can the institution help, if all the students are well, if everyone is integrated, what situations are occurring, we always make a moment of reflection. And generally the teachers join practically all for the meeting. I do it during the carnival break because there are no classes and they agree to come one day. And then at the end of the year we have a last meeting, where we schedule the party of the year, they say how it went, we do the evaluation of the school year, we schedule the party and that's it. [Director, woman, 32 years old]

The educators normally conduct informal evaluation, observing the development of the activities and asking what could be changed in the sense of improving the practices:

I know that some teachers are also trying to do it informally and are asking if they like it if they are not, and are trying to adjust to what the academics are interested in doing. I also know that there are teachers who also have, call it a toolbox. [Director, woman, 32 years old]

I am worried about the feedback that academics have, will give, and I will ask about the course, in the sense that it is being beneficial, not being beneficial, are not being useful, are being useful, are the topics being discussed in the depths intended or not, would like to see another depth, another type of activities, another type of guests. [Educator, woman, 39 years old]

The project "Lethes Go Caffe"

Its designation comes from the name given to the Teatro Lethes building, where the office of the Faro Delegation of the CVP is located and where this project operates. *Lethes Go Caffe*, open twice a week (Tuesday and Thursday), has become a space of proximity, sharing knowledge and skills. For its implementation the internship used a strategic partnership with ACTA- The Algarve Theatre Company, at the availability of equipment, use of space, and special discounts on the purchase of tickets for shows at the Teatro Lethes.

The project contemplated the creation of the space itself. A training room of the CVP was transformed into a space of conviviality, participation and education. A small library was created from the donation of books. The space became more welcoming with two sofas, a carpet, towels on the tables, and a shelf of teas and aromatic herbs, which were also donated to the project. This space was restructured by the participants themselves "They have brought the blankets, the towels, the books, and are composing the space, the room" [Director, woman, 32 years]. The fact that it was thought and built by people, make them identify and feel that space as their own. Through our observations it was possible to verify that this was a privileged space for informal education, since individuals get together, talk and share their experiences (Canário, 1999; Formosa, 2011; Gohn, 2006).

According the responsible for the project, the intervention model was focused on participatory management, both in the planning processes and in decision-making, and was based on listening to the interests of the participants, allowing all those involved to express their opinions. Throughout the project, several techniques were used to support the work developed.

With regard to the general objectives of this project, the aim was to create a space for and intergenerational learning, in which was possible to incentive activities for, and with, the older population, through a perspective of holistic intervention in which were worked physical, social and emotional skills, ensuring a process of active and inclusive ageing.

Regarding the specific objectives:

- Fostering social and civic participation;

- Foster interpersonal and intergenerational relationships;

- Promote motor skills, health and physical, psychological and social well-being;

- Promote creative capacities and a spirit of initiative;

- Develop personal and social skills.

The project comprised six large actions divided as :

Action I - *Thematic Menus;* Round of dialogues - discussion of themes in environment. Intimate, current topics and reflections; Salad of competences - such thematic workshops like: teas and aromatic herbs, construction of simple rod puppets, consultancy image, etc.

Action II - *Buffet:* Reading, Writing and Poetry - prevent cognitive aging, intellectual, promoting intergenerational interaction; Educational Games - access to games pedagogical and exercises where the problems of memory are worked through the Cognitive stimulation; Popcorn with Film - film projection, debate and discussion of the adjacent themes.

Action III - *Diet Plate* - the action aimed to work on the physical health dimension and through sports activities, walks, nutritional conversations and thematic dances.

Action IV - *Stories à la Carte* - the action aimed to share and reflect on the life stories of older people and work towards overcoming problems.

Action V - *Tours with History* - aimed to provide new knowledge, experiences and knowledge, promote moments of conviviality, joy and well-being and combat social isolation through tours. It included visits by seniors to historical spaces of neighbouring municipalities in order to enrich their knowledge of local facts and history.

Action VI - *Coffee and Digestive* - the action that incorporated the cultural and artistic dimension through Tertullian, going to the theatre, or fado nights.

Being a project of a internship student of one year it was considered by one side as an innovation and an opportunity but by other side they were not the possibility to keep going in the further years. In the end of the year, the project revealed good results, but as expected, proved to be very short, in the sense that most of its intervention had only two weekly activities and it would be important for them to have a deeper character in terms of their intervention and to be allied with a multidisciplinary team. If we consider a SWOT analysis we find that:

Strengths	Weaknesses
-Innovative social response	- Communication of activities to academics
- Informal space	- Dependency on the time of the classes of
- Diversity in the offer of	the university
activities	- Operation only 2x per week
- Self-sustaining project	-Difficulty in organizing outings
- Operation using the	involving buses
Volunteering	-Difficulty in transmitting to the

	scholars that the project is not one more class and it's an informal space without obligation - Operation using the volunteering
Opportunities	**Threats**
- Opening of the space to the whole community - widening of the offer in terms of Therapies	- Project closing due to end of internship - Lack of human resources for its continuity

Besides the fact that this project was sporadic was possible to see that has been an example in and for the community of how work can be developed with older people in an environment that promotes not only physical well-being, and welfare character, but also in the promotion of quality of life at the level of successful aging, through innovative responses and in constant adaptation to real needs.

The Participants

As in the precedent case study we can find two types of participants: the educators and the learners.

All the educators are volunteers. Some of them are employees of the CVP and give a couple of hours of work to this university. Others are external people, but by supporting the cause they accepted the invitation; in other cases the educators are people who were already attending the university as students and considering they had something to offer, they made the proposal do the direction of the university to create a new activity.

The group of learners is very diverse, mostly composed by female. In terms of age, the youngest have 55, the oldest have 87, being the largest age group between 70 and 75. In addition to the age of the group, which is very heterogeneous, a significant percentage includes people who had professions as doctors, teachers or lawyers and who have a good economic and financial situation. There is also a second group that has had technical professions such as seamstresses, cooks, farmers, electricians. According to the director, there is a big difference, but this one is also fundamental for the U3A, since with this diversity it is possible to have a wealth in "learn with each other" (Director, woman, 32 years old).

Reasons of participation on U3A

The reasons that bring people to these universities seems to be varied and to be related to the person's life experience (positive and negative aspects). This category emerged *a posteriori* from the information provided in the interviews namely by the questions "Why did you have an interest in looking for this university?; What were your motives?; What activity do you participate in? Why?".

In the following graphic is possible to see the main reasons of participation in the U3A (from our respondents 12):

Update knowledge (2)

Get new knowledge (6)

Curiosity (4)　　REASONS FOR PARTICIPATION　　Keeping body active (3)

Make a dream come true (1)　　Occupation of leisure times (1)　　Doctor's prescription (2)

Socialization (3)　　Feeling of Affect (3)
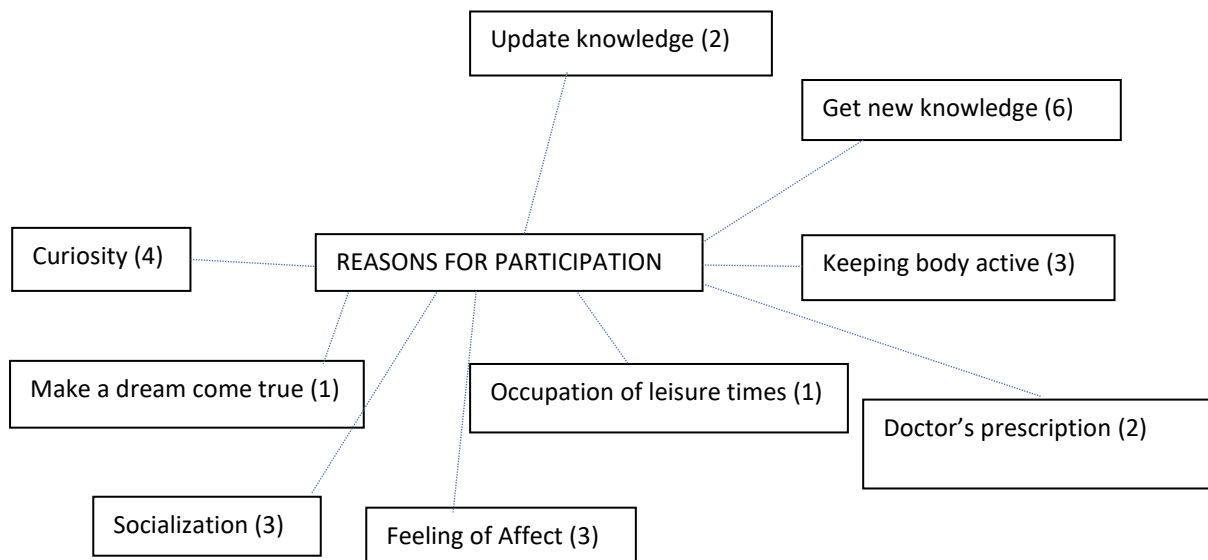
Figure 11: Reasons for participation on U3A

In general the reasons for participation are: get new knowledge, curiosity (and looking for opportunities of debate and dialogue), socialization, and feeling of affect- these context seems to contribute to the fight against loneliness, since many of these people do not have social groups and in some cases even family. However, according to the trainer responsible by the *Lets Go Café*, the situation is more complex than it, they look to have an intrinsic need to learn and share their knowledge:

> ...I started, in fact, to analyse the contents of the classes, the classes themselves, and the dynamics that they create between them, man. And it's, it's fantastic ...first because they only come because they want to, isn't it? It starts here. And because they need to share and learn, to continue learning. And that's what I notice. [Trainee, woman, 39 years old]

Or in other cases they have some personal motivations and desires that make them to look for these activities, such us keep moving in the life and keep updated:

> Gymnastics because I think it's one, that moving the body is a necessity. Because if we don't do anything, our muscles will fall asleep. And I like to be active, I like to get up every morning, take my bath, do my hygiene, do my things, do my personal gymnastics.. [Learner, woman, 74 years old]

> Because in my generation, we weren't very used to computers and I always thought that there was no need for it. I knew how to draw, I knew how to write, I did a lot of things, I thought I wasn't missing. When I realized I didn't know how to do anything, because everything was outdated and I felt the need to learn. [Educator/Learner, woman, 69 years old]

> Look, because I've always wanted to learn informatics. And when my children were small, I preferred to give them the course and I decided to stay behind. And since I didn't need it at the time... everything I needed they were doing, I wasn't very interested either. Now I really had to play informatics, because I think it's the future world.. [Learner, woman, 74 years old]

The fact that they want to continue learning, that they want to learn something they haven't had the opportunity to know in the past, or that they want to stay updated and follow the evolution of society (Formosa, 2011) seem to be the main reasons. There are also several cases in which people could only study up to the elementary school and see a learning opportunity in the U3A, or cases in which the doctors themselves recommend attending the U3A, in order to prevent physical and psychological diseases (as happened in our 1st case) (Pocinho, 2014).

Participation on U3A

This U3A reveals great importance for the individuals but also for the community in general. This importance and success seem to be related to several factors such as organisation, proximity, horizontality and openness to the wider community. This U3A has seen its growth among the older people, their ideas and their needs. On the other hand, it seems to be very well

organized and structured. The responsible team cares about people (they know them by name), there is constant sharing, and, in some situations, the older people have the role of protagonists (Sánz Fernández, 2006).

As we already said the older people are free to participate in the several activities. And they seem to choose it based in their needs and desires. The main activities chosen by our interviews were: citizenship and informatics that are disciplines that reveal their importance for the evolution of society and the need of adults to be updated; gymnastics, English, theatre and choir- that help with physical and psychological maintenance and give the opportunity to individuals to express themselves; then creative writing, painting, recycling, guitar, psychology, searching for happiness and poetry.

Afterwards we can see some examples of the motives that bring adults to choose their disciplines:

> Oh, the theater, theater is about showing us what's inside of us. It's transporting into ourselves, what we often intended to be. Because in my time, it's different from now. We lived a life that was a little more closed: you couldn't do this because it looked bad, you couldn't do that because it looked bad. It was very different from what it is now. (...) And then the theatre for me is, it's an awakening, it's a showing of what I wanted and what I want and what gives me strength, you know? [Educator/Learner, woman, 81 years old]

> [citizenship] Because I do find very interesting to learn new things. I find it very interesting and I like to be informed about what is happening in the world and our teacher is a teacher who gives me a perspective of life, of previous and current experience, which is very interesting. The way people relate to each other, all that, I like those disciplines... [Learner, woman, 74 years old]

We also highlight the involvement of the older people and the horizontality present in the activities that recall non-formal education as the construction of a collective identity (Gohn, 2006), related to participation, with the transmission of knowledge and with the exchange of knowledge (Canário, 2006; Sánz Fernández, 2006): "...teachers do not want to be called teachers, in fact they treat them for you, they treat them for you..." [Director, woman, 32 years old].

"Here we're all the same, there's no age difference, there's nothing. That's why I think this is very important. Because that's the thing, we need to feel still valid for anything, and here we have that." [Educator, woman, 81 years old]

And I think it's extraordinary to see how they [older] get involved and accept, and encourage this type of activities, from the most permanent to the most specific, and therefore I think that the academy only makes sense for me, with this range, with this openness... [Educator, woman, 41 years old].

Also the informal moments are revealed and appreciated by the participants: "The more informal ones give us the chance to be who we are, so today, for example at lunch, we were all the same, there was no one to demonstrate" [Educator/Learner, woman, 69 years old].

The relationship based on humanity, proximity and passion for work seems to be at the root of the success of this U3A and consequently the well-being of these older people:

> ...I think it is humanity we bring, closeness and working with the heart. And that this is part of our blood. It's not just a job, it's about people (...) I think it's this humanization of services that is the secret for everyone, whatever it was, people being seen as people, and I think that's fundamental for us. [Director, woman, 32 years old]

There are several moments, such as the Christmas party, when the older people are invited to bring company. Very often the husbands, children and/or grandchildren appear. Whenever possible, the U3A tries to promote activities that call the family. In addition, the U3A seems to represent a service for the wider community, participating in markets and performances; or acting with the choral singing group in other social institutions, such as the nursing home.

The U3A seems fundamental to promote education and combat the isolation of older people, creating bonds of friendship and providing participation from the most diverse activities, thus representing this basic triad described above (Jacob, 2005). For many adults, this is the only family they know.

The older people are not going just for participate in what is already defined by other, but in some cases, they look involved also in the definition of the program of the lessons:

> For example, at the level of psychology they bring the themes they would like to talk about and the teacher builds the program based on what they give; Joca also does a little of this, does a little of the research of themes and interests, and this makes it a little bit of a work together as well. [Director, woman, 32 years old]

Because this, I like to think as a narrative, this is not a school, that is, a co narrative, that is, I narrate and they narrate it. And the story is made in the construction of both parts. Therefore, and for this reason, it doesn't make sense to create a program centred on my areas of interest and on what I like, and not to have space or a part of space for them to say and discuss. [Educator, woman, 39 years old]

I do not have a program here, I do not have goals, I do not have aims, I am not evaluated, there is not a set of formal circumstances that are inherent to formal education and that here, in these contexts does not exist. Here it is supposed to be another type of criteria that are not so subjected to this issue of content. And so I try to make them more dynamic, to have a structure, to have an organisation, yes, but one that is flexible. [Educator, woman, 39 years old]

Another interesting point is that some of the educators have a dual role, being also learners. According with the director of the project this is a strategic point and one of the reasons for the good work they are able to develop:

…is the second secret of our academy. It's to be educators and simultaneously learners, for now because they are ...privileged for us because they have a very active presence in the academy, it demonstrates the facility and the way in which the academy is open to the various interests and the way things are organized and I don't even know how to explain them. But I think that's one of the richest things there is, it's people being able to be teachers and bring in a little bit of what they know, but they're also always available to learn and to stay in that position and I think that's very rich. [Director, woman, 32 years old]

Good! (smiles) It's a different dynamic, because when we're on the side of here and there, we can always put ourselves on that side. When I'm teaching, I know what it's like to be on the other side, so I'm more aware of the difficulties of each one. [Educator/Learner, woman, 69 years old]

Impacts of participation

Participation in U3A educational practices seems to have different impacts in the individuals that participate in it. These impacts can be in a social, a physical or psychological level. In some cases, the participants, educators and learner, reveal it as an opportunity for the improvement of the well-being. The following scheme show some of the impacts identified in our interviews (total of 10)
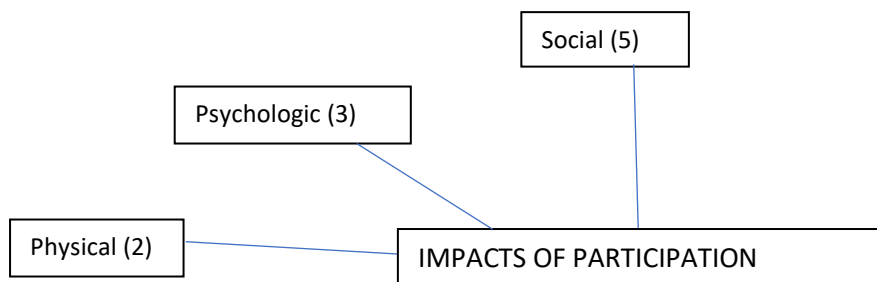
Figure 12: Impacts of Participation

Regarding the physical and psychological level this university have some examples of results visible in the health of individuals: "...for example, there in rhythmic gymnastics last year, it was last year, there were two ladies, who came from the Psychiatry Centre, very closed, uncoordinated, the movements, are much better, this is a sign that really this is open to everyone." (Educator/Learner, woman, 81 years old); "I have to go up and down the third floor every day when I come here." (Learner, woman, 87 years old);

> I have several, but the one who in the last meeting of teachers came more to the conversation was this lady who came here referred by psychiatry and who came very sad, very discouraged with life and who today looks like another. We all commented on this between teachers and everything. In the meeting we talked a lot about the evolution that this lady has had, and the way she was looking at things at the moment. People who arrived with some physical difficulties, locomotion and everything who gradually flourished and became more alive... [Director, woman, 32 years old].

In social level it works as a context where they can find new peers, friends or even a family: "Look, it is mainly to revitalize the memory. To feel good about ourselves, to feel company with others, and this academy comes to give me, it seems like a family that I don't have." (Learner, woman, 74 years old); or "And then it's the friendship between people, let's see, all these people who are here, we didn't know each other's names or anything. We crossed there in the street and nothing and today we don't!" (Learner, male, 72 years old); or another example: "People who were very lonely and who found a group of friends here that they did not have, lived a lot for the house, for the husband and then the husband died and were alone and did not have a cycle of friends, and this was a kind of response. [Director, woman, 32 years old].

For last the importance of the work of the U3A as context, standard for the improvement of the quality of life, not just for the ones that are learning but also for the volunteer educator that are going there: "My quality of life. My self-esteem, the self-esteem of many students, the coexistence, all this has been very important and continues to be." (Educator/Learner, woman, 69 years old);

In fact, when I say it's one of the best parts of my week, it's actually one of the best parts of my week, because they give me good mood and satisfaction. Because even many times when I come out here from university I am tired, I go "ah now I don't feel able to it", but I already know, I go because I already know it's just the way there. Because once I get there it's impossible not to smile and not to return those smiles and that liveliness and good mood, because we are welcomed so affectionately, so enthusiastically, that it's impossible for a person not to be... to be indifferent to this. [Educator, woman, 39 years old]

They have to be the models that are appropriate because if we think, for example, of the transition to retirement itself, it is very traumatic, in some cases, because one day we are going to work and we have our lives set up in a certain way and the next day is gone. So it is necessary not only that there are mechanisms to prepare for this transition but also that there are responses in the post, which is to work for leisure, if it is to work for the well-being of people, then we will allow to do it effectively. [Educator, woman, 39 years old]

I think it's fundamental. Because I think active aging (...) It has to do with the question of opening horizons. And I think that these cultural activities, the walks, getting to know the culture, seeing an exposition, attending a concert, that's it, the most diverse ones, the ones that they think are part of their range of interests, are fundamental. From the preparation to the act, then to the reflection, all this is life. That's what I think. It's resilience. It's optimism, it's hope, it's satisfaction with life, so yes, I think all this has a place. [Educator, woman, 39 years old]

I think that the others also have their importance, and their place, and one does not replace the other, they all complement each other. And I think it's extraordinary to see the way academics get involved and accept, and encourage this type of activity, from the most permanent to the most specific. And, therefore, I think that the academy only makes sense, for me, it only makes sense with this range, with this openness. And there's our perspective, which I want to see if we can explore more and more is, we know how to know here within the university very important, and sometimes very interesting. [Educator, woman, 39 years old]

As in the previous case, this U3A has several characteristics that allow us to state that many principles of the dialogical model can be found there, namely the various moments of interaction and sharing of experiences, the promotion of an equality, dialogue and the motivation of adults for new learning and knowledge (Sanz Fernández, 2006).

10.3. The case of the Research University

This study was conducted during the month of January 2019. For this study we conducted one month of observation in the context. This observation was not continuous because we needed to organise our observation based in the schedule of lessons. After the first days of observation and consequently some contact with adults we started to individualise some key persons to interview. We conducted a total of 10 interviews to the individuals, as we can see by the following table.

Case 3	Age	Male/woman	Roles on U3A		
			Administrative	**Educator**	**Learner**
1	82	Woman	Yes (Director)		Yes
2	74	Woman			Yes
3	69	Woman	"Public Relations"		
4	75	Male	Yes (President)	Yes	Yes
5	79	Woman			Yes
6	69	Male			Yes
7	71	Woman			Yes
8	81	Male			Yes
9	29	Woman		Yes	
10	87	Woman		Yes	

Table 4: Respondents distributed by age, gender and role at the university

From the table, is possible to note the huge diversity regarding the age of the participants. For other side, there are not a big reciprocity in the roles. The only that are having a double role are the ones in the directive board and basically, they are going to the conferences they are organizing.

Contextual framework of Tincani Institute

Tincani was founded in 1976 as a cultural association, with main office in the centre of Bologna. The increase in its activities has required its transformation into "Carlo Tincani Institute Association for scientific research and dissemination of culture". It is named in honour of a scholar of Greek and Latin literature, a pupil of Carducci.

Tincani carries out its activities in the line of the European tradition, humanistic and Christian, with the conviction that faith and reason are, together, distinct and related. For these reasons its logo is: "*Fides et scientia*". This tradition, continuously renewed, is today the tool not to lose the heritage of knowledge that is anchored in the authentic idea of man and that are essential to promote, in a scientifically and technologically advanced society, a real progress of the human community.

Figure 13: Logo of the institute Tincani

In this perspective, Tincani organizes research seminars, debates and conferences on anthropological and cultural issues, with attention to scientific innovations and social changes.

In the year of activity 1981-82 the "Tincani" has founded, among the first in Italy, a "Free university for adults and older adults". Opening to anyone who wants to attend it, regardless of the degree possessed, organized its courses for cultural areas and thematic groups.

Foundation and development

The idea of founding an Institute for scientific research and the dissemination of culture was born "in the field", which emerged over the years from the constant determination to meet the cultural need - driven by the search for the truth - that each age group has expressed in its time.

The Carlo Tincani Institute was established as a further development of the Library for Young People. This library was established in 1966 by a group of teachers from the state school in order to meet with their students and other students, aiming to provide them valuable and training books. Likewise, they propose cultural initiatives of Christian inspiration. In this sense, from the very beginning, many Catholic teachers collaborated to guide young people in cultural research, conferences, integrative courses, film forums, etc..

Ten years later, in 1976, the teachers and their collaborators, professors in the University and in the high schools, meeting the interest shown for their cultural initiatives by a wide circle of people, decided to find a cultural circle.

The growing participation of the public and the extension of the activities led to the transformation of the cultural association into "Institute for scientific research and dissemination of culture", legally established in 1981.

What promoted the choice of this identity and the will to maintain and develop this objective was the study and research activity, spontaneously undertaken by teachers and students from the mid-seventies, with great profit and enrichment for all participants. The research work has been carried out since the early years in the form of seminars and in the implementation of the project "youth culture", aimed at offering young people of the last two classes of secondary and university help to identify the elements qualifying the scientific research, preparing them - in some way - to face a university career.

The participation of young people and adults in these shared experiences of study and research has aroused, then, the request for greater attention to training for adults and old adults, starting the last process of development of the Institute. In 1981 the Institute thus started the Free University for adults and the older adults, with the aim of offering them a reason for social participation, meeting and dialogue and a serene and formative cultural activity:

> It was missing, that is, it covered a gap that did in fact exist because many of those who came did not have a university degree, they had never made universities and this offered them the opportunity to take university courses (...) The success was extraordinary, as

witnessed, I remember the queue that was waiting to enter all over this square. That then in those years was the same thing so it really changed the world. [President, man, 75 years old]

The Institute and the Free University are two realities that coexist and integrate. In fact, the Free University is responsible for the courses and other activities, while the Institute is responsible for study and research, the library, publications, Friday conferences and any other initiative aimed at all age groups.

Organization and resources

According the regulation of the Free University for adults and old adults of Tincani Institute, the aim is to offer people the possibility of a further social participation through the appropriate knowledge and the most appropriate opportunities for meeting and dialogue (Regulation Tincani, s/d). What the Free University of Tincani is trying to reach is a purpose of knowledge, that is, the expansion and updating of the cultural background of the participants, in an era of strong innovations and discoveries, but also a purpose of communication and sharing, as it is a place of meeting, exchange of experiences and socialization.

At the time of enrolment, a fee is paid which entitles the student to become a member of the institute and to attend all the lessons of the courses and the Library. This fee covers the secure and the attendance at courses offered by the university (called as global course). Besides that, participants can enrol in integrative courses. These can be language courses, artistic laboratories (theatre, singing, dance and memory training). These courses are extra and paid individually.

The social structure of the University comprises a President- voted by the members of the directive board; the director- named by the catholic union (missionary union of the school); the directive board and the administration board. All these members are volunteer.

Then, one of the particularities that makes this university different from other is to have a volunteer for the welcome or reception. This lady makes the role of public relations, knows all the participants and pay attention to their needs and problems. For example, when someone is not going for a while, she contacts them and try to understand the problem. This show the human side of this context, that is caring out of their participants:

Here, by doing the global course, you can create a network of friendships, interests, conditions, in short, contacts that for them is very important because they are many times lonely people! And for this reason we have our own voluntary, who is suitable for the welcoming. Welcoming does not mean only when they come, but that it speaks to them (...) they talk about their problems. When they are sick maybe she makes the phone calls: "I have not seen you for some time, there is something wrong?" so they feel remembered (...) This I think is a strength.

Project and educational practices

The educative project of this U3A bases is pedagogic model in a catholic association and in the principle of "Fides e Scientia":

> *Fides and scientia* is what distinguishes this Catholic, Christian approach a little bit. All the values of science supported and in harmony with the faith. Also, because who made available then, who raised, it' s us (...) we are missionary of the school (…) eh we try in the culture to find the roots of our science, our culture, with the principles of faith. [Director, woman, 82 years old]

Moreover, the directive of this U3A seems to give a great value to the culture and personal growth of adults, declaring the importance of the U3A in our days:

> I am convinced that personal training work remains fundamental, I am convinced of this, first of all for cultural reasons, for the things that I have mentioned, no? For the history not only of myself but of the whole group that worked here and for those who continue to do so in the free university. (…) In fact, I believe that one of the current losses is precisely this lack of functional work. Do not believe in themselves again! [President, man, 75 years old]

In this sense the President attests: "My concept of university work must be precisely one of training and cultural growth." (President, man, 75 years old) and it seems to reflect the main line of their work.

The main objectives of the University are:

> Among the objectives. (...) In addition to the objectives of broader and updated knowledge, we must also set a very important goal. Participation, creativity, so that they are not really the subject together, but they are also the protagonists of what they do. [Director, woman, 82 years old]

Regarding the organization of activities this U3A is divided in three groups: the global course, integrative courses and conferences.

The global course are weekly activities, in a logic of big conferences, with non-compulsory presence and comprise different cultural areas such as: Archaeology, Astronomy, Bible course, Religious culture, Right, Economy, Philosophy, Italian and foreign literature, Medicine, Psychology, Geological and natural sciences, Sociology, History of the project, History of costume in Italy, Art History, History of Music, History of Bologna.

> …we have a programme of activities that stands out. So we have this global course where you write-on for all cultural activity that goes from the beginning of October to mid-May. And it includes subjects from a variety of cultures. As you have seen, archaeology, astrology, law, economics, literature… [Director, woman, 82 years old]

Then the participants have the possibility to enrol in the integrative courses, such as: European Language Courses (English, various levels; Spanish, various levels; informatics, artistic laboratory (fabric, watercolour and drawing), dance laboratory, singing laboratory, theatrical laboratory, memory training (basic course)). These courses work once a week, with a total of 25 hours (from October to May). These courses are important because normally they began by the request of participants, for reasons of personal needs or desires, as we can see in the coordinator words:

> Then, we have some issues for which not everyone is suitable, for which not everyone has an interest and we did it because maybe some students had a dream in the box. They have qualities that they could not exercise during their work activities and so we did the art workshop, we did the singing workshop, we did another performance workshop, besides this one. (…) They teach once a week. [Director, woman, 82 years old]

For last, this U3A all Friday afternoon offers free conferences, not only per associates but open to all the ones that are interested in. Contrary of what happens in the other courses and laboratories, these conferences have relators that are coming as volunteers.

There are also extra activities such us guided tours, educational trips, or shows organized for them during the academic year. Every time that there is extra activities the learners who wish can participate in it. These activities can have an associated fee that is variable according with the activity.

An interesting point is that according with the regulation of the university, at the end of the course, for who wish and request it, can ask for a certificate of attendance, that not having legal value, can give moral recognition.

Regarding the evaluation this U3A the direction has the concern to make a questionnaire at the end of each year. Through the consultation of its participants tries to understand the evaluation that they make of the organization, the activities and the teachers:

> …consultation of the members. By asking them as a central point to indicate at the end of each year of activity, what they would like to continue, what they do not want to continue, what they preferred. Sometimes only in terms of subject, sometimes also in terms of teacher as it is understandable, and this applies to the whole type of teaching. [President, male, 75 years old]

> …we do an evaluation sheet at the end of the year. Quite specific where they say the subjects have been lengthened, if they have been certain enough, too short the lessons, if they have liked, if they have not liked, as it has been, in short these things. And let's say which are the new topics you want. [Director, woman, 82 years old]

For the professors, at least some of them, the evaluation is made informally, in the end of each lesson, in this way they are able to realise and reflect of what went better or worse, and how they can change their practice, improving it.

The participants

The registered participants (learns) in this U3A are approximately 250 (2018/2019). Being the majority female (85%). According to ages they have between 50¨and 90 years old. But is possible to find two participants with less than 50 years old and three participants with more than 90 years old. The group with more participants is the one between 71 and 80 years old (49%), followed of the group between 61 and 70 years old (25%).

This diversity is verified also regarding to the level of education and passed jobs:

> …they usually have a diploma. They were professionals, but there are also for example the head teacher, there is an engineer, there are some even of a high level, say medium-high. I do not know if you've noticed, even there is someone for example who knows everything that has worked, who asks the questions that others get bored as well (laughs).

(...) But in general medium-high, accounting for example, technical institute, high school. [Director, woman, 82 years old]

Between the participants in our study we can find persons with a degree in psychology, with a technical course in a specific field such as accounting or commercial, or without a course such as housewife's and construction workers. However, besides the diversity of educational levels it doesn't look a problem. For other side, the persons who doesn't had the opportunity to study for financial reasons, seem to be resilient regarding their reality and tried to learn by themselves: "I know people who have done the fifth grade or have done the lowest class and are very educated people, people who are self-taught, who read a lot and who know a thousand times more than me" (Learner, woman, 74 years old).

The social and cultural diversity of the participations does not look as a problem but a benefit for all. They are open to dialogue and to share knowledge one each other's:

So you can find people with different cultural backgrounds to be interested in the same topic. that you have a good relationship more or less friendly, it also becomes an exchange of ideas, because I have a different background, different thoughts from yours. [Learner, woman, 71 years old]

The same lady declares that she learns something at same time she finds new friends

When we are together, we discuss etc. And we have a different education, she has a degree and we are comfortable. I am the poorest, let's say, but we feel good! And they're the ones who, when we're together, I'd say they're happy too. (...) So there is also this possibility of sharing by making a bit of friendship, let's say our origins. [Learner, woman, 71 years old]

In what concerns to the professors in this university they were invited to do this work and normally they are paid (seems to work as a school for adults of a training centre). The only situation where the professors are not paid is in the Friday conferences. Whatever, in these cases, if the invited is coming from out of the city a small compensation can be given for the trip.

Reasons of participation on U3A

The reasons that bring people to these universities seems to be varied and as in other cases to be related to the person's life experience (positive and negative aspects). This category emerged

a posteriori from the information provided in the interviews namely by the questions "Why did you have an interest in looking for this university?; What were your motives?; What activity do you participate in? Why?".
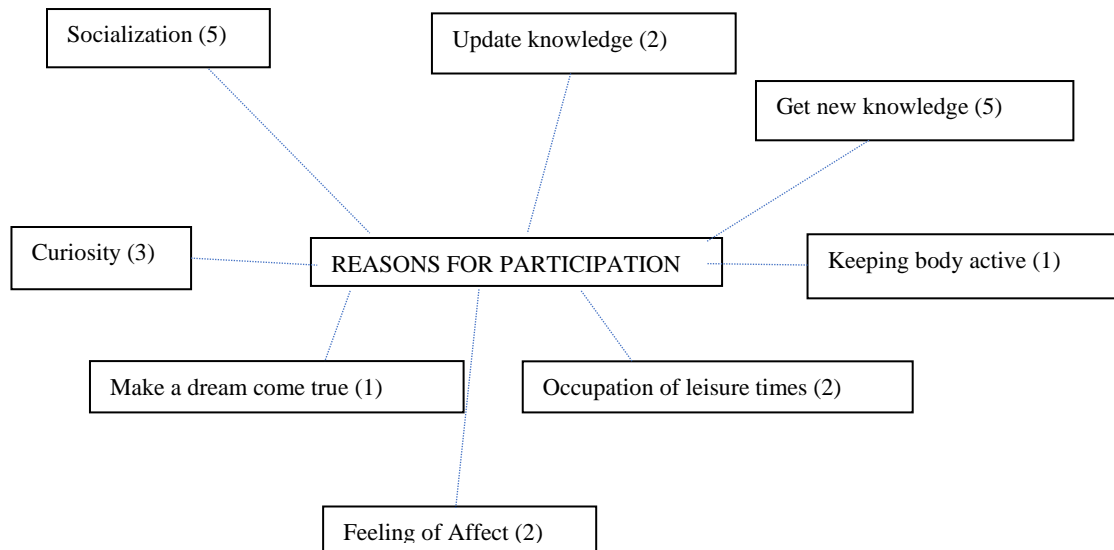

Figure 14: Reasons for participation on U3A

Regarding the reasons that bring people to this U3A, in general they are the occupation of leisure time with something useful for their life's. In other cases, they are coming to fulfil a desire – to study something- that they could not realise when they were younger:

> …trying to figure out something I could do afterwards because if I could I would have gone to university, but I didn't have the degree to be able to access university. I couldn't go to university with that age. (…) And so I come here, personally there is one thing, I'm curious. I like new things and I have not been able to do much literature [Learner, woman, 71 years old]

> For example, I have the emptiness of history and philosophy, I have always worked in the area of commercial so I have always wanted, I have always thought, "when I don't work anymore I will be freer and I attend this university of the third age", and that's how it ended. As soon as I had the chance, I came here. [Learner, woman, 79 years old]

> The dance for the motivation I told you before (...) One person must know, means coordinate, have balance and I realize that ... I realize that I am not a person who coordinates movements well because when you are inactive for so many years ... (...)

And there is the dance that then combines the mind and body that really is psychomotor and therefore helps a lot, both brain activity as motor activity, and also the movements, balance, to coordinate their movements, no? [Learner, woman, 74 years old]

I did well to come because I do not want to lose! I don't want to lose my little knowledge of English, and I don't want to lose my openness and I don't want to lose the chance, if there's one thing I don't know, to learn a new one, if I can't lose it! [Learner, woman, 71 years old]

I was missing culture a lot and I became very passionate about it. Then I was curious to understand, to see, to know many more things because there are not only the famous classics. I discovered others (smiles). Then I also do philosophy with Venturi, philosophy is always fascinating, as is the anthropology that did it with More, basically a bit of everything. Then the history of Bologna I have always done the guided tours because people never know enough and it is enough. [Learner, woman, 71 years old]

For other persons that participated in the study the motives are also the prospective to change country, so it could be useful to learn a new language, or just to travel.

Participation in activities

As we already said the participants that paid for the global course are allowed to participate in every lesson. The payment of this fee works as a free pass, they are free to go but they are not obligated to. For other side, the ones that are interested in the integrative courses or laboratories need to pay an extra fee to participate (correspondent and individual for each course) and being frequented by fewer participants they have a bigger responsibility to attend it.

In general, the program of the different courses are predefined and the lessons are supported in frontal methodologies. In other cases, also if there are a pre-established program, the educators have the notion that is important to evolve the participation in the process of the course. As happens in the laboratory of theatre:

One thing that interested me too when I presented them my project was to make them researchers of their selves. So, I worked this play on words of researchers, didn't I? So if I wanted to make them write, I would be very interested in them making their experience emerge, so gradually… [Educator, woman, 29 years old]

The director defends that this is an open university, that gives the possibility of a deeper participation, in the sense to evolve the adults but also to listen them, improving the own work of the university. As a result of this some activities and groups were created and gave great prestige to the university:

> …and here there has been, there is still a sector that is very much appreciated, for example indicating precisely this active participation, which are not only the fruits of what we give, but also inventing things for them, for example, were invented by them the lessons of singing, choral singing, were invented by them the theater. [Director, woman, 82 years old]

For some participants the participation there are involvement and opening from the part of the university, always having in consideration the role of each one: "I feel involved! I do my homework." (Learner, woman, 71 years old).

Some specific disciplines such as theatre are being adapted to the group age and are working in a personal way, and this seems to contribute to the adult's satisfaction:

> This theater here (...) to me it's new. Which is fascinating the same because it is beautiful has a way of involving people totally different from, in quotes, classical theater lessons(...) I don't know, they are new experiences for me, so I like them. [Learner, woman, 74 years old]

Some learners complain about the problem of the communication and lack of dynamic between the individuals. They recognise that there are really great professors, that are well prepared, but not able to pass their message to the old adults. They use structured language and methods, that are a struggle and a problem for the learning of this group: "there are professors that are really well prepared, but not able to arrive to persons" (Learner, male, 81 years old). Another point presented by this learner is the fact that questions can be a problem, because they broke the discourse of the relator and in the most of the times, they are personal questions that are not interesting to others.

Impacts of participation

Participation in U3A educational practices seems to have different impacts in the individuals that participate in it. These impacts can be in a social, a physical or psychological level. In

some cases, the participants, educators and learner, reveal it as an opportunity for the improvement of the well-being.

> we're a very familiar university. I mean, you know? If you go to the other you are a number and that's all, but here we always try to be very much... I am in friendship with everyone (...) yes, there are, people that have changed a bit, slightly, they are defrosted. [Learner, woman, 69 years old]

> Actually, it's early, but small miracles have already happened, so yes. Some of them I have seen as melting, opening up. To be much less afraid of the things I proposed. This evening we also had a statement that is an autobiographical account of a person who seemed very shy. Instead, she wanted to say this thing. (...) Or a lady who has a bit more difficulty at the motor level, a bit slower and so she was very nice because at the end of last Monday I received thanks saying that I give her some real afternoons and so I cried because it really gives me a sense of what I'm doing. [Educator, woman, 29 years old]

> I notice some people who are all so "Good morning..." instead you know I'm going there and I say "Good morning! did you enjoy the lessons?" and I see that slowly that is, not some changes from so to so, but there are truly changes! [Public Relations, woman, 69 years old]

And these seems to reveal impacts also in the life of educator:

> Yes, at the level of secure estimation, of what they are. It makes me feel... because it is also the first job I do on my own level (...) and therefore for me this is an important step in my path of growth because if it's good is my responsibility, if it's bad is my responsibility. And I am very happy to do this just to show myself that I can do it. So I need it totally. [Educator, woman, 29 years old]

The fact that they want to continue learning, that they want to learn something they haven't had the opportunity to know in the past, or that they want to stay updated and follow the evolution of society (Formosa, 2011) seem to be the main reasons. There are also several cases in which people could only study up to the elementary school and see a learning opportunity in the U3A, or cases in which the doctors themselves recommend attending the U3A, in order to prevent physical and psychological diseases (Pocinho, 2014).

10.4. The case of the Community University

This study was made during the month of February 2019. For this study we conducted some observations in the context. This observation was not continuous because we needed to organise our work based in the schedule of lessons (two afternoons a week). After the first days of observation and consequently some contact with adults we started to individualise some key persons to interview.

We conducted a total of 10 interviews to the individuals, being them part of the administration board, educators or learners, as we can see by the table that follows:

Case 4	Age	Male/woman	Roles on U3A		
			Administrative	**Educator**	**Learner**
1	69	Male	Yes (Pres.)		Yes
2	74	Male	Yes (Coord.)	Yes	
3	27	Woman		Yes	
4	28	Woman		Yes	
5	58	Woman		Yes	
6	66	Woman			Yes
7	56	Woman			Yes
8	60	Male		Yes	Yes
9	74	Male			Yes
10	70	Woman			Yes

Table 5: Respondents distributed by age, gender and role at the university

From the table, is possible to note the huge diversity regarding the age of the participants. There are a team of educators really young working here. In general, they are coming here to make their lessons (and they are being paid for it) but they have another job in the field of what they are teaching. There are a few cases where we can see a double role, it happens because sometimes they are going to the conferences that they are organizing.

Foundation and development of the University

The Community University was born, more or less twenty years ago, as an activity of the municipality to cater the educational and social needs of the elderly in their community. As project and activity of the municipality this was arrogated and managed directly to the municipality. As a local activity it was a small reality that counted with 20 participants. Later with the passing of the years it grew, and the municipality felt the need to affidate the project to an expert entity: "It had about twenty members, so it was something very smaller, quite a lot of the local city. Evidently in the years grew in quantity, to the point that there was been the inclusion of group of Rezzara" (coordinator, male, 29 years old). This group was already dealing with some other realities of old adult education, so they had experience and tradition in their work. Every year the municipality is publishing a call for project and then the interested associations could participate in it. In a certain moment of the history of this university a group of participants (named circle) decided that wanted to get the responsibility for running their own University. So, they looked for some association that could support them, and at the same time could let them free to follow their own project and ideas. They were able to get this support from Auser, to participate in the call of the municipality and to win the concession of the activity. Since then, the organization of this U3A belongs to this close group: "…for various reasons from 2014, 15 I think has arisen the new university atestina of the free age, we started to give something more than the usual praxis" (president, male, 69 years old).

At this moment the directive is composed by 15 elements, between these were elected the president, the vice-president and the other responsible elements.

Organization and resources

The university of organized by the circle of friends. They work together with a coordinator that is external to this group. Together create the annual project with the activities and then deliver it to the municipality, that is the main responsible. The municipality is also the main financier of the project.

In addition to the money that the municipal administration makes annually available for the project, the participants need also to pay a fee of inscription that comprises the insurance. This fee is 70€.

The lessons work in a building of the municipally, equipped with different rooms.

According the responsible for the project, the main aims of this university are: "Personal satisfaction and a service to the community" (President, male, 69 years old) and socialization

> The fundamental objective is socialization, so cultural activity is declared in its social function and therefore at the didactic level each one can choose which course to participate in. (...) there is no precise goal of the educational point of view. The idea is to offer some cultural activity that can stimulate curiosity, this fundamentally, give insights to stimulate curiosity about a subject or a topic, a theme. [Coordinator, male, 29 years old]

Project and educational practices

This university doesn't look to follow a specific model. They support their project in the tradition and in the requests of the participants. Besides that, they have the concern to choose professors with quality in knowledge and communication:

> The structure of the courses is something that goes on from these twenty years, from what they like. And the foundations of the current activity are to propose courses on the basis, as much as possible of the requests that are made at the end of each year from the students. And we aim at the quality of the teacher, which is not only linked to knowledge, cognitive ability but also clearly to communication, which they know how to communicate. [Coordinator, male, 29years old]

According the coordinator, the activities are structured thinking in the needs and availability of the participants (learners). When structuring the offer, they try to find an equilibrium between different variables in a way that it could be appealing to adults

> You can go deeper with something without having to do a too long course that can then become boring, so always in an attempt to balance and above all to give more possibilities, more stimulation from different subjects so that one can choose when to participate. [Coordinator, male, 29 years old]

The structure stands out because their academic year is divided in three parts (2 months each part):

1. The first part is marked by conferences. These conferences are continuous. The theme is chosen between the relator and the direction of the university and is divided in seven

different lessons. The themes can be, for example: astronomy, family law or women's literature. These lessons are in two different rooms, and for the 260 at the same time.

2. The second two months span, although integrating some conferences and guests, is the specific period for the laboratories. All the laboratories work simultaneously, so the participants have the possibility to choose just one. The laboratory works one time a week for seven weeks (1h each lesson). The different laboratories are: theatre, music, museum, journalism, English, Spanish, drawing.

3. The last period of lessons is also sustained by conferences.

We highlight that one afternoon a week the university receive a local personality or some responsible of companies from the city, that is invited and goes there to talk about their work: "So we try to give some visibility to the local personality"; "I thought that on the whole it is something that pleases both the administration, both us and the public that comes. Because various and certain personalities for a single person are inaccessible" (President, male, 69 years old).

Besides these activities we can find two collateral activities: the choir group and the cultural outings. In some occasions such as the inauguration of the year, the end of the year and thematic parties (as the Christmas) they organize a party and they invite all the participants, educators and learners.

The choir started with a seminar: "was done one day and was enjoyed so much that they wanted to continue it as a side activity". This is an auto managed activity, from both director and participants of the choir. They meet each other outside of the schedule of the university to do their lessons. And after the lessons they go out for a coffee or a snack. It seems to fortify they rapport and friendship:

> I'll give you an example: when we have choir rehearsals, when we sing, it's nice to stay at the table, have a coffee and have a chat and we get to know each other, because I didn't know anyone in here and so we take home the pleasure of being together… [Educator/ Learner, male, 60 years old]

Regarding the evaluation this U3A the direction has the concern to make a questionnaire at the end of each year. Through the consultation of its participants tries to understand the evaluation that they make of the organization, the activities and the teachers. However, this questionnaire is not so much about the training objectives, but the satisfaction at the end.

In the last lesson of the year they present the general results of the questionnaire to all the participants such as the new proposals for the next year: "There is always a questionnaire every

course, every end of the academic year and there is a questionnaire to fill in where you can express some or even give advice on any other subjects to be discussed, yes." [Learner, woman, 66 years old].

For some educator the evaluation is important, but more during the process that in the end

> So, in my opinion, the evaluation is in progress, in the meantime it is the feedback that, as I told you, I already try at the time of the lesson and then it is the practical return for example, so after this I will realize if what I have explained has been received or not. Basically, however, I do not have evaluation grids from the university... [Educator, woman, 27 years old]

The participants

Up to this date the registered participants (learns) in this U3A are 260 (2018/2019), being they limited by available structure and limit of lessons. The majority is female, most of them widows or that are without family. Between the participants we can find persons with a degree, with a professional diploma or even some just with the elementary school. Is possible to find some persons with a low social level, but the majority is in the middle group. Also, at professional level, is possible to see the diversity of the group: "There are people who just have fifth grade and come here, I don't know how much they understand, but they bring home something and it's important. There's a hunger for knowledge at every level" (Learner, woman, 70 years old).

And is interesting to see that being a small city, there different professional groups that know each other and create their own group inside the university: "They did the most different things. There's a small group of obstetricians at the front. You can see them looking at the screen in front of the left are all obstetricians and then there are several retired teachers. Self-employed people..." [Coordenator, male, 29 years old]

The ages of participants can go from 50 to more than 80 years old. However, is interesting to see that there are some cases of younger people that look for this context, principally is they are in a situation of unemployment or pension for invalidity.

Also, learners are coming from more than 20 different surrounding cities. The president assumes that it happens because the structure of this university is diverse and offers more activities than others.

In what concerns to the professors in this university they were invited to do this work and they are paid for it (seems to work as a school for adults of a training centre). They create their program, present it to the directive and then they are free to organize the lessons as they want. In general, we can see that the group of professors is really young. Many of them have another work and arrive for invitation.

Reasons of participation on U3A

The reasons that bring people to these universities seems to be varied and to be related to the person's life experience (positive and negative aspects). This category emerged *a posteriori* from the information provided in the interviews namely by the questions "Why did you have an interest in looking for this university?; What were your motives?; What activity do you participate in? Why?".
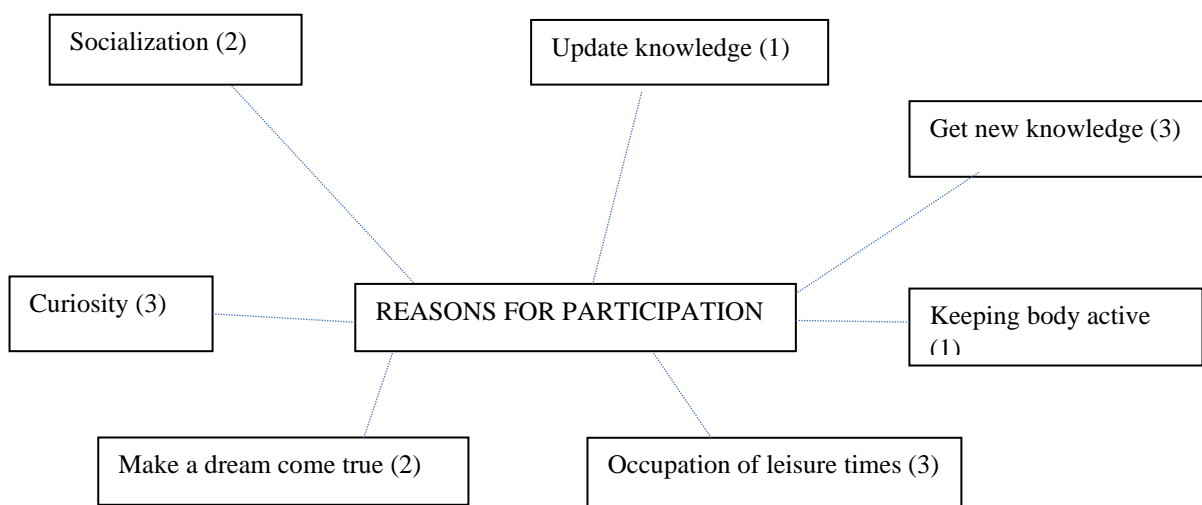
Figure 15: Reasons for participation on U3A[3]

Regarding the reasons that bring people to this U3A, in general they are: the occupation of leisure time with something useful for their life's. One of the particular motivations seems to be the prestige of belonging to the context: "I can't give you that for sure, it's not studied at all. But also, a small prestige, in the sense that attending the university of leisure time. Already the name of the university gives that" (Coordenator, male, 29 years old).

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[3] The image represents the reasons for participation in U3A, presenting the code and the different associated categories. The number corresponds to the interviews in which this reason occurred.

In other cases they are coming to fulfil a desire – to study something- that they could not realise when they were younger: "In several cases there also happened that several people who have not had the opportunity to study in the past and so (...) They have the opportunity to study that they have not had in the past." (Coordenator, male, 29 years old).

In other cases, they are looking the context just for the pleasure of study, remember contents, learn new contents and support these learning in the socialization: "I don't want to fall asleep. I've slept enough already, now I'm exploring." (Learner, male, 74 years old);

> So they're people who want to have company. From the cultural point of view they want to improve their knowledge or they want to be formed. I would say fundamentally this, desire for socialization and desire for more depth knowledge. Socialization with all the value that entails, exchange. [Coordenator, male, 29 years old]

> …this eye disease obviously impeded me from continuing my great passion that is medicine and then you have to find something to do, you can not stay at home crying (...) You have to go outside, you have to go and get busy, make the day go by. [Educator/Learner, male, 60 years old]

In the case of younger persons participating in U3A activities the reasons are the free time and the need to keep it busy in a productive way, learning something: "First of all, I'm curious to always learn something. After the coincidence was that I stopped working so I was a little 'free time and then I decided to attend precisely because I had so much free time (smiles)" (Learner, woman, 56 years old);

> The curiosity to know and have free time and know that there is this possibility. I make this example, the first year there was a twenty-one year old girl who could not find job and did not go to college and told me "in the meantime while I wait to work continuously with this activity" in fact came about half a year and then found a job. That's why it's called the free age and not the third age. [President, man, 69 years old]

Participation in activities

The majority of the activities are frontal and don't require a big participation of adults. It looks to be like that by tradition, also if some adult seems to complain because would like more space to participate, for the big majority it does not look a problem. These last group looks convicted that it should work as a school: "It's consolidated over the years. I think it has been proposed

as an idea for school and it has become more than a lesson, a conference." [Coordinator, male, 29 years old]

All the registered adults are allowed and free to participate in every lesson. The payment of this fee works as a free pass, they are free to go but they are not obligated to.

In general, the program of the different courses are predefined and the lessons are supported in frontal methodologies. Is possible to see some exceptions in the case of the laboratories such as journalism and theatre. Besides the structured program, they are flexible and give to adults the possibility to be their selves, to give opinion and criticize:

> For me it is very important to keep their attention alive, ask questions, ask them what they want to explore and get immediate feedback - like, "Have you found this thing? Where did you see it?" also with particular reference to their daily context. [Educator, woman, 27 years old]

> I have defined the program, then in part also consulting the students because precisely for these reasons here. Since they have to have a motivation, it was also important that it was something that was interesting to them (…) it became to follow their interests and adapt them to the grammar and vocabulary that they have to learn and then develop the program according to their stated needs. [Educator, woman, 28 years old]

> In the theatre there is the stuff that you work doing, it's not that you're sitting down, no you must do and it's not that you're like the languages that you have to learn it (...) And after you make friends after you come also for friendship, you don't just come to learn because when we find the people with whom we have fun we go there (…) [Educator, woman, 58 years old]

Some learners seem to complain about the problem of the communication and lack of dynamic between the individuals. They recognise that there are great professors, well prepared, but not able to pass their message to the old adults. Another point is that participants in many cases, would like to have more space and possibility to participate and make questions: "Maybe a little space for people to ask questions. We here use to ask 10 minutes of questions at the end of the lessons, but maybe if there was more dialogue it would be nice." (Learner, woman, 56 years old); "Yes, there's a lot of passivity, there's someone who takes a nap (sorry!) there's someone who snores (smile)." (Educator/Learner, male, 60 years old).

Otherwise, some learners would like to have more time for laboratories (activities more dynamic developed in little groups) and less time for conferences.

Impacts of participation

Participation in U3A educational practices seems to have different impacts in the individuals that participate in it. These impacts can be in a social, a physical or psychological level.
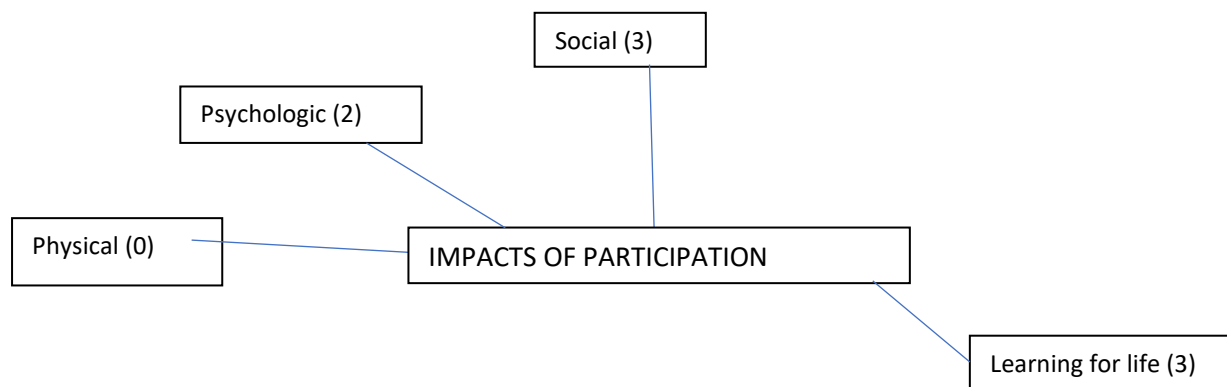

Figure 16: Impacts of participation

In some cases the participants reveal the impacts of their participation and think it is an opportunity for the improvement of the well-being: "It's an antidote against loneliness" (Coordinator, male, 29 years old); "Because it helps an adult to keep a more lively memory, the mind always on the move and also to stay young, to socialize." (Learner, woman, 66 years old);

> I think it's because you give people the opportunity to learn, they also feel more useful and I see that the people who come here are much more motivated, much more active, much more positive than the other people who don't come here. [Educator, woman, 28 years old]

> And then it's very important, they try with this little contribution, they feel an emotion that makes them alive. This at their age serves to still feel like children because the emotion makes us all equal at any age. And so I tell you that they are small things, but as you see afterwards they get passionate, they make a group, it's important to be together, they all feel excited. [Educator, woman, 58 years old]

> Last year's my students (…) have acquired a security and also the pleasure of taking risks. They understood that it's no use limiting yourself to anything, it's no use to anyone except them, they understood that it's a game because the theater is an intelligent game in which you always put yourself back into operation even in discussion so you need this principle

134

of playing with yourself, but I told you yes. I've seen great changes and I was very pleased to see them. [Educator, woman, 58 years old]

These seems also to reveal impacts in the life of educator, that affirm to learn: "I have learned a lot because we learn the slowness that is something that you do not learn in other courses, you learn to get involved, you also learn a lot from the point of view of their needs" [Educator, woman, 28 years old].

11. Discussion of the results

Having in consideration the data in the last chapter (Case Studies Presentation), where we present the four case studies, is possible to explore and make a discussion of these results. As we said before this research compares the situation of different contexts developing social or cultural practices and that seem to contribute to old adults' life. Though the different contexts and the range of activities that are present, there are some potentialities and high points that we can analyse collectively. To conduct this discussion, we support ourselves in the four studies and in the sub questions of our research.

11.1. Contextualization of social and cultural contexts (within an educational character) for older adults

As we can see all the contexts are different in matter of situation of support, organization and structure. The point that seems to be common to all and centre the U3A is both countries is the aim: respond to (educational) existent needs in old adults' life.

Our case 1 was developed by a group of nine friends. They decided to get together and to create an association that could set up the U3A. In this way, they were able to create a place where they could develop a work at their image, that could mean something for them, responding to their expectations and ideals. This association and consequently this U3A is independent, autonomous and self-sustaining. They created their own regulation, structure and organization. They also created their own rules and symbols that seem to guide their practice.

Our case 2 is supported by the Red Cross and starts as a response to the recognised need by the Social Action Sector of the organization. This University emerge as a project at image of other similar projects of the country and based in the regulation and spirit of work of the Red Cross. Being a humanitarian international movement, neutral and non-connected to the State, respond to itself.

Both Portuguese cases seem based in humanistic standpoints. The main concern seems to be the adult and the work together with adults having in consideration their needs and involving them.

Our case 3 is a part of an institute that stands up the importance of research and culture. Based in a catholic order, is supported and structured in the traditional and previous practice. Since always involved in cultural work in the city, follow their own regulation. The main aims of

their work are to offer to people the possibility of a social participation and opportunities for knowledge, meeting and dialogue.

Our case 4 is a project supported structurally and financially by the municipally of the city. This project is offered by a group of friends of the municipally that had the desire to act in the territory, to do something for them and others. Each year they are responding to the call of the municipally and winning the concourse. Being a project supported by the municipally have a strong structure and some limitations regarding political themes. Such as the case 3, also this one supports strongly the practice based in the tradition.

The two Italian cases seem more formal than the Portuguese ones. They are programming and organizing their work, mainly supporting the practice in the traditional and previous practices. On other side, in Portugal seems to be the concern to evolve with the community and to appropriate the practice to respond to the individuals' needs.

11.2. Reasons for old adults to participate in education

The motivations to participate in educational contexts are several and seem to be related to the positive and the negative aspects of the experience of life of individuals. The graphic that follows represent the motivations that are common in all studied contexts:
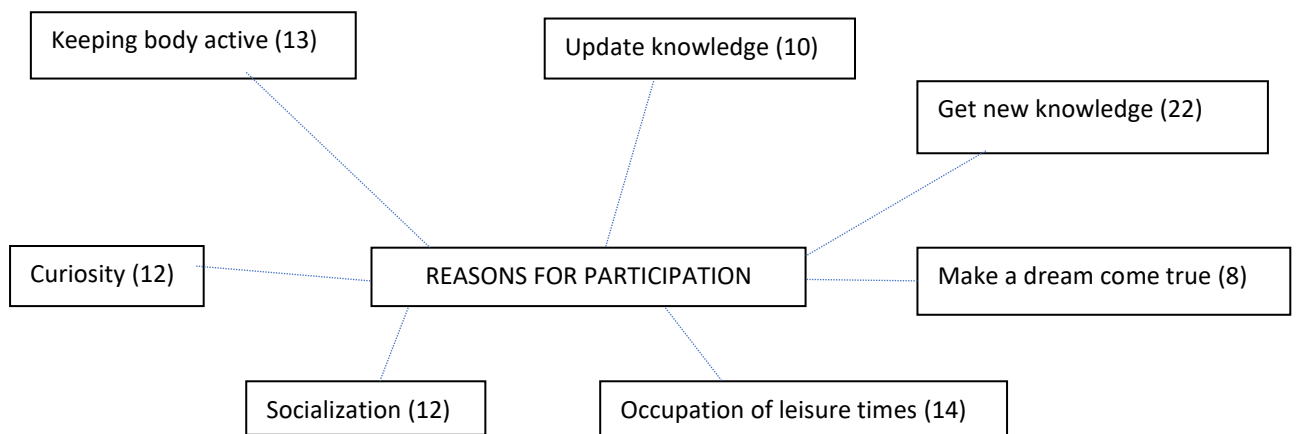

Figure 17: Reasons for participation in the U3A

The main reasons for participation in all cases are the "curiosity" to the context and to learn, the "socialization" to keep in contact with others, the "update of knowledge" and the need to "get new knowledge", "keeping the body active" keeping active, moving and going out of

home, "occupation of leisure times" with something useful and "make a dream come true", it is to do something that for some reasons they didn't had the opportunity to do in the past. Then, beside these we can see other reasons that are not common to all. Such as
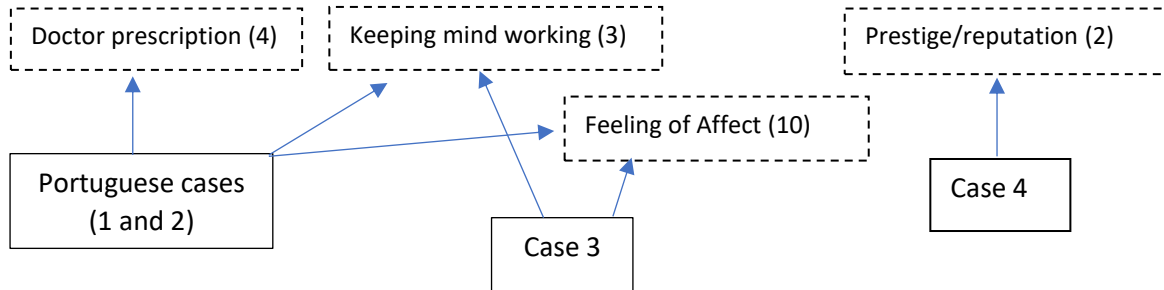

Figure 18: Other reasons for participation

The reason "Doctor's prescription" is quite referred in the Portuguese cases but is not mentioned in the Italian cases. On one side, the motivations for participation show some distinction in the case 4. Is the only case where we cannot find any participant (between the ones that were interviewed) with the motivations "Keeping mind working" or "feeling of affect", present in other three cases. On other side, is the only case where is presented the motivation feeling of "Prestige/reputation" for participating in U3A. This difference can be because they work as a formal school for adults and they have a formal rapport with adults.

Case	Conferences	Cognitive Development	Physical maintenance	Performing Arts	Artistic Strand	Cultural visits
1	1 per week Not the main activity of the U3A	During all year	Yes	yes	yes	Yes (Main activity in summer)
2	Sporadically	During all year	Yes	yes	yes	Yes (Inside the courses)
3	Based in conferences	yes (with an extra fee)	Yes	yes	yes	-
4	Based in conferences	yes (just 2months)	-	yes (self-organized)	yes (2 months)	yes

(Authors own, 2019)

Table 6: Educative offer in the U3A

If we look at for the table 3 *Educative offer in the U3A* we can see that the offer can be diverse and embrace conferences, activities for the cognitive development, activities for the physical maintenance, performing arts, artistic strand and cultural visits. We highlight the fact that the cases 3 and 4 (Italian cases) focus their practices mainly in conferences (frontal methods). However, in Portugal is possible to declare that they focus their activities in specific courses, more individualized. These can be a way to give a better response to the individual's needs. In all the four cases we can see the importance of the performing arts, being them some of the activities that most increase the self-esteem of the adults; it helps them to get free of stereotypes, to be themselves and for last, to have an active role in a specific group.

Having in consideration the general perspective of the offer is possible to present the main interests of the adults.

The main educational interest of adults that peek to participate in U3A activities seems to be the Performing arts such as theatre and choir group. This are activities present in all the studied contexts. It gives the possibility to old adults to participate actively, to interpret or express themselves. For other side, these activities normally work as a group based in a strong identity. Then the adults interests goes generally to languages, informatics and others which enable them to evolve and accompany the development of society, so they can be able to understand their reality, being curious; with languages knowledge they are able to travel without language limits and the informatic is important to contact and live out with new technologies (something new that is not from their times).

11.3. Levels of old adults' participation in educational contexts

In these studies, we tried to recognise the levels of participation of adults, namely regarding the choosing of activity, proposing, planning, development and evaluation.

Case	Choosing	Proposing	Planning	Developing	Evaluating
1	Yes	Yes	Yes	yes	Informal
2	yes	Yes	Yes	yes	Informal
3	Yes	Yes (final survey)	-	Yes	Yes (final survey)
4	yes	Yes (final survey)	-	yes	Yes (final survey)

(Authors own, 2019)

Table 7: Participation of Older Adults in Activities

This table shows the participation of older adults in the activities concerning some criteria as: choosing, proposing, planning, developing and evaluating. In all cases the participants can choose the activities they want to participate in; and are participating in the developing of the activities. Regarding the proposing and the planning we can see that in Portuguese cases the U3A give the space for the proposals, their flexible curriculum makes possible a complex involvement of the adults (they can decide the program together and propose new things during the courses) and also plan their own activities; there is a constant dialogue; in the cases 3 and 4 the U3A gives the possibility of Proposing and Evaluating the activities in a final written survey. Based in the responses of this survey the administration decides how to act in the next year. But there are not space for participation in other levels or any kind of dialogue of feedback during the year.

Case	Methods	Practices	Participation	Dynamics "Learn each other"	Affectivity "Recognition of affect, fun and pleasure in learn"
1	Participative	Flexible	Active	Versus dynamic Educator-Learner	yes
2	Participative	Flexible	Active	Versus dynamic	yes
3	Passive	Non-flexible	Passive	-	yes
4	Passive	Non-flexible	Passive	-	yes

(Authors own, 2019)

Table 8: How old adults participate and learn in U3A

Concerning the last table, we can see how adults participate in U3A, it means how learning activities are structured: methods, practices, type of participation, dynamics of participation and feelings described by "affectivity".

In first place we highpoint the main differences between both countries. In first two cases we can see participative methods, flexible practices and consequently an active participation that conduct to interesting dynamics between different learners and between learners and educators. By other side, the hard configuration of the Italian U3A seem to limit the work or the benefits of this context for the adults. They develop a work mainly structured, frontal lessons and guided by transmission of information and passive methods; consequently, there are a passive participation of the individuals; and the only dynamic is the one of the traditional schools, where the professor debits the knowledge to the students, without any kind of dialogue or possibility for questions.

For last we would like to highlight the last point: Affectivity, which is related with the adult feeling and can be defined as "Recognition of affect, fun and pleasure in learn". This point is

common in all our cases reveals the importance that the U3A can have in older adults' life's. The encounter between learning, socialization and community as attested by Veloso (2011) seems to be the key for the dimension of affectivity in the U3A. The older adults are able to recognize the affect, to have fun and to find pleasure in learn individually but also with the others. This last point is related with the perceived outcomes get from adults' participation and that we will focus in the next paragraph.

11.4. Perceived outcomes in old adult lives, resulting of participation in educational contexts

The old adults participating in U3A perceived different impacts from their participation. According to them these impacts can be a different levels such as psychologic, social or even physical.

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  Physical
Social         Educacional
Psychologic
               Cultural
     IMPACTS OF PARTICIPATION
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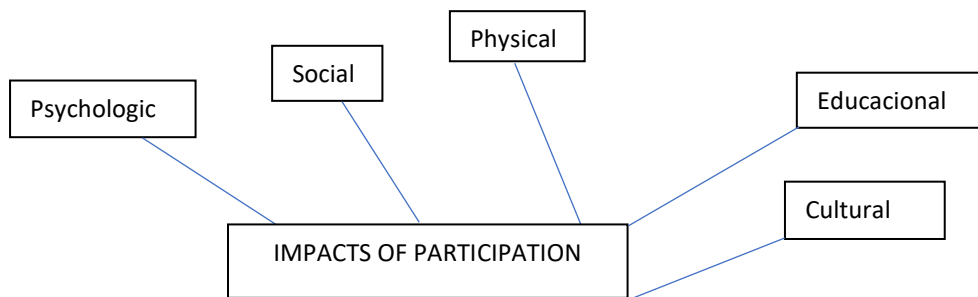
Table 9: Impacts of participation in individuals

At social level people seem to create groups of pairs, new friendships, or create a connection with the community. They consider it is a "medicine" against loneliness and other problems related with isolation. It can be also a solution against psychological problems or to prevent it. With the participation in these educational contexts they keep active and it contribute for their motivation and participation. Physically they can active, participating in activities to maintain their coordination, movements and agility. At educational and cultural levels, they are able to enrich their culture and knowledge, it gives them the possibility to be culturally fit but also to experience self-fulfilment and to approach a deep knowledge of themselves.
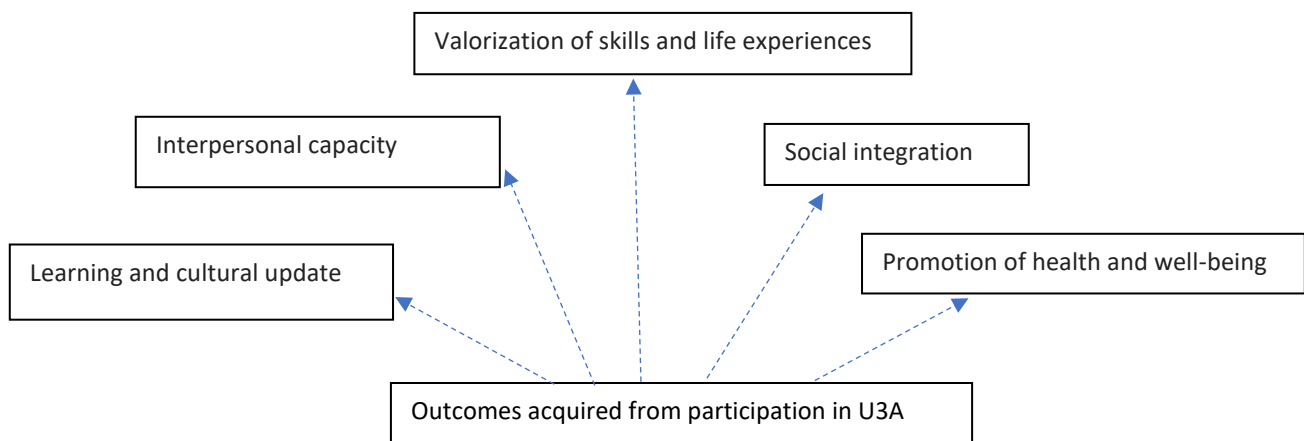
Figure 19: Outcomes acquires from participation in U3A

Considering the data from the four cases, we identified some groups and we reach to some results, that look positive outcomes for the adults:

- *learning and cultural update*, it means that adults, after the pension have the possibility to keep learning and in contact with learning and cultural activities. These factors give to individuals' the possibility to learn something new or to remember and update their knowledge.

- *interpersonal capacity*, as a context of persons, they create relations between them. Our date shows that U3A are a context were the old adults can develop relations, create social groups and in some cases create a little community (that they call by family).

- *valorization of skills and life experiences*. In fact, the contexts as U3A are crucial for the valorization and the sharing of experiences. These adults already lived and have a strong knowledge, a strong richness to share with others. In some cases, we can see that the adults teach and learn each other. The fact they can learn and teach at the same time, sharing their skills and knowledge make them feel good, with a role and a propose in their days (Formosa, 2014).

- *social integration*: participating in a U3A seems to give to adults the role and the group they need to feel part of something. Besides that, the U3A opens the possibility to establish important ties with the wider community. Many adults, involved by the U3A and stimulated by it, participate in the community. They can participate in open activities, for prevention or sensibilization, they are supporting several institutions as volunteers, etc.

- promotion of health and well-being. This last point seems to be one of the most important for the adults. In fact, if the U3As are a success nowadays is because the adults go there and feel good. They are free to choose and to participate in the activities they want. In some cases, they are proposing new activities and developing it by other. The different activities seem to stimulate the adults to learning and participation.

Conclusions

This research, of an exploratory nature, had the purpose on the one hand, to explore how social and cultural contexts that develop educational activities, could give voice to the adults, developing co-produced practices and promoting the participation of individuals. For the other hand, was our aim to understand what are the outcomes that old adults acquire within their participation on educational contexts and how these outcomes respond to the old adult needs. In all our cases, the U3A present themselves as a space open to all people, flexible in their practices and based on the educational and social needs of the adults who attend them. In this sense, these are civil society organisations that are guided by the principles of the Permanent Education. Adults are listened to at various times and together work to find solutions to existing problems and consider new projects. In general, I all cases there seems to be a horizontal relationship that makes the contexts richer, where individuals feel good and like to be and participate.

Through the data found it is possible to say that the educational work developed in the two cases studied in Portugal is based on non-formal education practices (Gohn, 2006). Through the analysis of these non-formal practices and considering the models of adult education outlined by Sanz Fernández (2006), we can say that the studies conducted in Portugal show that, the U3A follow the social dialogic model and are based on five main points: a participatory methodology, are flexible, group and socializing, dynamic and affective. The methodology is participatory since the critical involvement of learners is stimulated at various times. The participation of older adults in the design and development is constant, although sometimes informal, in the initiatives undertaken. The sharing was visible in the various disciplines in which the adults participate, in which they can decide the theme they want to see addressed, in addition to that they can approach this theme, considering their needs, issues and previous knowledge (Sanz Fernández, 2006).

The practices are flexible in the sense that some of the courses/disciplines do not have a predefined programme. Sometimes this programme is built with the learners themselves on the first meeting, or from meeting to meeting. In general, those responsible for the subject are flexible and open. It is possible to recognise the benefits of empowerment of adults participating in educational activities (Formosa, 2012). These are contexts of group and participation, because in addition to the relationships that are established, they promote dialogue, interaction and the sharing of experiences (Canário, 2006; Gohn, 2006). The practices

create a dynamic, which is active, where most of these individuals - educators - are also learners. That is, they contribute in their activities as educators and U3A members, while participating in other activities as learners. This is a fact that seems to provide relationships of great empathy and respect from both parties (educators - students) and foster a specific, horizontal and strong dynamics among all (Sanz Fernández, 2006) as well as exchange of knowledge (Canário, 2006) between those who know because they studied (educators) and those who know because they learned through experience (learners) (Sanz Fernández, 2006).

Relatively to the approaches to old adults' education, it is possible to declare that in the Italian cases the U3A seems to work essentially as a formal school for adults with structured programs and frontal lessons that can take 100 or 200 of adults at same time. Trying to analyse these results we can say that the development, the structure and the models of work followed in U3As in Italy seems to be strongly related with the conception of traditional school. Based in a model predominantly passive, transmissive and where one person (speaker) is the expert and has all the relevant knowledge about the topic. In this case, the idea of going to a school "to hear the expert" makes the adults feel prestigious as students and as individuals; it follows a positive impression in traditional scholar models. Furthermore, we can attest that in an educative culture as the Italian one, where the prevalent actions are constricted by a strong bureaucracy, few resources and limited structures, it seems easier to create programmes and activities that are simple to manage, i.e. conferences (Ricardo & Porcarelli, 2019).

Finally, in both countries it is possible to refer to the affective part present in these contexts, because all these activities recognized affection, fun and pleasure as basic factors and originated groups of friends who, starting inside the U3A, continued to other spaces. On the other hand, many members of these U3A seem to have in this entity their groups of friends and even "their family", feeling safe and well, in a space with which they identified (Gohn, 2006). It should also be noted that, as shown in Formosa (2014), some activities require the involvement and participation of subjects, debate and critical reflection, which does not always happen. Maslow himself (2010), in the hierarchy of needs, places the need for affiliation, friendship and belonging on the third level. Socialisation, in addition to being one of the main objectives that universities intend to meet, is one of the main reasons why adults enrol at universities of the third age. Socialisation is a dynamic and emotional need that accompanies the human being throughout his life, from the first days of life to death. People are not made to be alone: the need for relationship, belonging and friendship are the witness of this.

Moreover, the lack of policy (critical education) of the offers educational proposals is perhaps the biggest gap that the U3A under study denotes. Therefore, many principles of the emancipatory dialogical model seem to be fulfilled, however, the activities fall short in what refers to the political and transformative character of the initiatives. On the other hand, there is an ambiguity of the educational offer that seems to translate first into the profile of the educator who has the characteristics of a teacher, whose function is to teach, as well as pedagogical methodologies that are based almost exclusively on mechanical teaching (reading and message reception), not taking into account the needs or differences of subjects, as Sanz Fernández tells us in the literacy model (Sanz Fernández, 2006). It is also important to mention the role of U3A among those who do not have opportunities for access to a basic education and seek these contexts to learn to read and write (literacy model) (Sanz Fernández, 2008) or younger individuals who have a profession seek the U3A for the development of skills useful to the productive sector, new professional and specific knowledge (productive economic model) (Sanz Fernández, 2006).

In conclusion, it is considered that, although the activities developed do not have as their main purposes the critical education and awareness of individuals (as defined by Freire, 1996) pointed out by Formosa (2012), it is possible to mention that the U3A seems to represent a context for the development of processes of participation (Gohn, 2006), of educational practices and leisure activities and the promotion of the well-being of the older (Formosa, 2014) catering some of their needs (Maslow). Therefore, participation in an U3A is a way for older people to maintain methodologies that allow them to foster forms of social integration, based on the individual and his/her needs (Sanz Fernández, 2006). The activities promoted by the U3A studied aim to be updated, active and aware of their personal condition (Pocinho, 2014), which contributes to a positive aging (Formosa, 2014). Finally, it should be noted that these are four of the many possible cases to be studied and that it is not possible to generalize the results obtained.

These U3A seem to be an educational context for old adults with a crucial role in the social and democratic challenge, by including everybody and promoting opportunities to dialogue, interact, and share experiences. In general, all the contexts look as fundamental to promote education and fight isolation among the old adults, creating friendships and social participation through activities. Giving to the older adults the possibility to find responsibilities and roles in their lives, U3A show results in a direction of respond to individual's needs.

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Appendices

Presidente e Coordinatrice

La prima parte della traccia (storia, organizzazione e svolgimento) permetterà di avere una percezione di come è sorta questa istituzione, quali sono stati i momenti più importanti in questo ambito/scenario, in termini di sviluppo e come questo ambito sia stato formato in termini ufficiali (organizzazione e obiettivi).

La seconda parte della traccia riguarda le attività svolte e i partecipanti. Tramite questo modulo si vogliono identificare le attività svolte in questo contesto, ~~qual è~~ (o "quale sia") l'obiettivo di ogni attività. Si desidera inoltre sapere come vengono svolte le attività, ovvero, quale metodologia venga utilizzata, chi sia il responsabile delle varie attività e a chi siano destinate. Per concludere si intende verificare se esista una qualche modalità di valutazione formativa per queste attività.

Con l'ultimo modulo, relativo alle opinioni, vogliamo esplorare i punti di forza e i punti deboli di questa istituzione. Desideriamo ulteriormente conoscere l'impressione del responsabile riguardo alla rilevanza dell'istituzione, tenendo in considerazione vari fattori.

1. **Storia**
- Contestualizzazione storica. Come sorse? Quando e perché venne creata?
- Qual è il modello guida dell'istituzione?
- Quale percorso ha avuto l'istituzione?
- Quali parametri hanno contribuito allo sviluppo (oppure no) dell'istituzione?

2. **Organizzazione funzionamento**
- Com'è strutturata l'istituzione?
- Esistono enti/ organismi sociali? (come sono divisi? dirigenti? Soci?)
- Come sono composti e quali le loro rispettive funzioni?
- Finalità dell'istituzione?
- Ci sono obiettivi specifici per l'educazione/ la formazione?
- Chi finanzia l'istituzione?
- Questa istituzione ha una sua ispirazione ideale? Ci sono riferimenti pedagogici generali ai quali si ispira?

3. **Attività sviluppate**
- Quali sono le attività esistenti? C'è un programma definito?
- Come sono definite le attività? (i partecipanti si trovano coinvolti in questa definizione?)
- Come sono strutturate le attività? (i partecipanti si trovano coinvolti in questa definizione?)
- Quali sono le attività più ricercate? (perché?)

- Chi sono i responsabili delle attività e quali sono le metodologie didattiche più utilizzate?
- C'è qualche tipo di valutazione per ciascuna attività?
- C'è una relazione tra Libera Università e gli altri contesti educativi, culturali o sociali (partnership/ collaborazioni o progetti svolti con la comunità in generale)? (esempi)
-

4. Partecipanti coinvolti

- come sono caratterizzati i partecipanti? (livello personale- età, scolarità), professione svolta-, condizione sociale (gruppi sociali più significativi), culturale.
- chi sono i principali partecipanti e perché?
- qual è il grado di coinvolgimento dei partecipanti? (definizione, applicazione...)
- Come è strutturata l'organizzazione professionale? Quale è l'organismo dirigenziale?
- Com'è caratterizzato (personale, sociale, culturale)
- i soggetti dell'organismo professionale operano anche come partecipanti/alunni?
- esistono attività aperte alla famiglia o alla comunità in generale? Quali?

5. Pareri/ opinioni

- ritiene che ci siano aspetti comuni tra la formazione denominata "tradizionale/scolastica" e il lavoro svolto in questa istituzione?
- quali sono i punti di forza che fanno la differenza in un'università per adulti? (cosa hanno di particolare? cosa porta le persone a partecipare?)
- in che termini questa istituzione è importante? (contesto, attività, contenuti, partecipanti)
- con il tempo… è possibile notare delle differenze nei partecipanti? esempi
- quali sono le principali difficoltà dell'istituzione?

Presentazione

Età
Stato civile
Professione
Situazione professionale attuale
Titolo di studio

-In che modo è arrivato a conoscere questa università? Da quanto tempo?
-Perché ha avuto interesse a cercare questa università? Quali sono state le sue motivazioni?

Partecipazione

-A quali attività partecipa? Perché? Da quanto tempo?
-Chi sono i responsabili delle attività e quali sono le metodologie didattiche più utilizzate? Quali le piacciano di più?
-C'è qualche tipo di valutazione per ciascuna attività?
- Qual è il grado di coinvolgimento dei partecipanti? (definizione, applicazione, valutazione)
- Esistono attività aperte alla famiglia o alla comunità in generale? Quali?
- Ha avuto cambiamenti nelle sue reti sociali? (nuovi amici? Nuovi gruppi?)
- Partecipa anche in altri contesti? Associazioni? Gruppi?

Pareri/ opinioni

- Ritiene che ci siano aspetti comuni tra la formazione denominata "tradizionale/scolastica" e il lavoro svolto in questa istituzione?
- Quali sono i punti di forza che fanno la differenza in un'università per adulti? (cosa hanno di particolare? cosa porta le persone a partecipare?)
- In quale misura questa istituzione è importante? (contesto, attività, contenuti, partecipanti)
- Con il tempo… ha notato delle differenze in se stesso? esempi
quali sono le principali difficoltà dell'istituzione? Cosa si potrebbe cambiare?

Commenti? Suggerimenti?

Appendix 3: Índex of figures

Appendix 4: Index of Tables