



THE 60 + TAZELENME UNIVERSITY IN ACTION: “PROJECTS THAT SERVE YOUR HEARTS” DURING CORONA VIRUS EPIDEMICS

LA UNIVERSIDAD 60+ TAZELENME EN ACCIÓN: “PROYECTOS QUE SIRVEN A SUS CORAZONES” DURANTE LA EPIDEMIA DEL CORONAVIRUS

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ABSTRACT

Thanks to improved living conditions and medical intervention opportunities number of older people is rapidly increasing recently. With the critical structural changes, old age became severed from the profession, feminization, singularization, and impoverished. It is, therefore, crucial to keep this group active and happy to maintain individual and social well-being. 60+ Tazelenme University, the first third-age university of Turkey supports literate older people with third-age education and social support networks. COVID-19 pandemic caused many difficulties threatening the freedom and well-being of older people. 60+ Tazelenme University aims to produce life-saving projects with the understanding of "stay at home but do not stay passive". The purpose of this article is to introduce these projects. Projects such as Fresh Khizir, Fresh English, Fresh Food, Fresh Phone Chain, Fresh Knitting, Fresh Corona Diary, Fresh-Cocoons, Fresh Buddies, ensure that the older people who are at home under COVID-19 restrictions remain active. These projects inspire new concepts to support normalization in the post-pandemic period.

Keywords: University of the third age, older adult education, distance education, covid-19, gerontology

RESUMO

Graças a melhores condições de vida e oportunidades de intervenção médica, o número de idosos está aumentando rapidamente recentemente. Com as mudanças estruturais críticas, a velhice foi desvinculada da profissão, feminização, singularização e empobrecimento. É, portanto, crucial manter este grupo ativo e feliz para manter o bem-estar individual e social. 60+ Universidade Tazelenme, a primeira universidade de terceira idade da Turquia apoia idosos alfabetizados com educação de terceira idade e redes de apoio social. A pandemia de COVID-19 causou muitas dificuldades ameaçando a liberdade e o bem-estar dos idosos. 60+ Universidade Tazelenme visa produzir projetos que salvam vidas com o entendimento de "fique em casa, mas não fique passivo". O objetivo deste artigo é apresentar esses projetos. Projetos como Fresh Khizir, Fresh English, Fresh Food, Fresh Phone Chain, Fresh Knitting, Fresh Corona Diary, Fresh-Cocoons, Fresh Buddies, garantem que os idosos que estão em casa sob as restrições do COVID-19 permaneçam ativos. Esses projetos inspiram novos conceitos para apoiar a normalização no período pós-pandemia.

Palavras-chave: Universidade da terceira idade, educação de idosos, educação a distância, covid-19, gerontologia.



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"If you want to build a ship, do not drum up the men to gather wood, divide the work, and give orders. Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea."
Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

INTRODUCTION

Historians always emphasize the benefits of looking at yesterday to understand today and tomorrow. This notion also applies to ageing and old age. Today, the circumstances have changed once again with the corona virus outbreak. The corona virus epidemic that swept the world has changed our perception of old age. The year of 2019 was declared as "Senior's Year" in Turkey, alas seniors have been claimed guilty for the outbreak and have become "scapegoat" in 2020. Views on old age and older people gain meaning according to the circumstances of a time period. If it is not known that the following view is from 4500 years ago, it can be thought that it is said today: "How sad and full of pain is the end of an old person! He becomes weaker every day (...). His heart cannot find peace anymore, his lips become silent, and he does not speak. He loses consciousness and cannot remember today what happened yesterday" (Ancient Egyptian scholar Ptahhotep, 2500 BC, as cited in De Beauvoir, 1977, p. 78).

Humankind develops from cradle to grave. This is a process of gains and losses (Sommer, Künemund, & Kohli, 2004). As a result of the improvements in living, health care and nutritional conditions, today we live in a "grey world" (Hedderich, 2003, p. 13). In China alone, more older people will live in the middle of this century than people over 65 living all around the world today (Schirmacher, 2005, p. 11), and "those who read this text will be able to reach an age of maybe 200 and perhaps more" (Mann 1982, p. 11). Today, most deaths occur between the ages of 60 and 80 (Hedderich 2003, p. 15). In fact, "man is immortal" according to some researchers (Mann, 1982). However, men suffer from heart disease twice, commit suicide three times, die due to murder four times more than women (Sieber, 2006, p. 28).

Ageing is as old as human history, but at the same time it is also a very new phenomenon. It occurs with its biological, medical, psychological, sociological, and economic dimensions. It is a social problem on one hand, and it is an individual issue on the other. Therefore, ageing has perspective related meanings (Karl, 2003). Theories and practices on various perspectives are gradually mounting (Wahl & Tesch-Römer, 2000, Kruse & Martin, 2004, Oswald, Lehr, Sieber & Kornhuber, 2006). From a philosophical point of view, human beings have a responsibility towards the next generations and fulfil a collective function that sustains life (Birnbacher, 1988, p. 11). To



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do this, they must be active, creative, healthy, and “it is never too late for a new start” (Goldman & Mahler, 1995).

Human life expectation at birth remained around 30 years in 99.9% of the history. Neanderthals lived for 20 years on average in the year 100 000 BC. When the first Olympic Games were held, the life expectation had increased to 32 years, but after 500 years it fell to 28 years in Rome, 20-25 years in medieval times (Imhof, 1988), it just raised to 40 years by the mid-1800s (Rizza & Gauderon 2004, p. 10). Today, life expectation at birth varies among countries, but expands in almost all countries with some exceptions (Wahl & Heyl, 2004). A person can live for 130 years according to available information (Rott, 2004). Life expectation of a man of middle age declines to 70-80% of life expectation of a women. That is the reason why women constitute the two-thirds of the population aged 85 and over (Sieber 2006, p. 27). In fact, "feminisation of the ageing" (Tews, 1999) is also a phenomenon that is now observed in Turkey (Tufan, 2016). The fertility rate is declining faster than expected and the 2018 report of Population Studies Institute of Hacettepe University revealed that the proportion of 65 years of age and older in the population has been reached to 10% for the first time. It is expected that 15 million people will be at the age of 65 and above in 2025 in Turkey (Tufan, 2007).

It is therefore crucial to maintain or rebuild the competencies of older population through the learning and training into most advanced years. Knowledge, skills and abilities can be considered under the concept of competence. Competencies can be diverse and partial. It is important to ensure that the losses occurring in the ageing process do not turn into a "total" loss with the acquisition of new knowledge, skills and abilities, so that individuals protect both their objective and subjective safety and independence.

Here we implemented a learning and training model, the Tazelenme University, to construct a balance of competencies between individual needs and abilities as well as a balance between the demands of environment and individual's knowledge and skills (Jasper, 2002).

OUR ANSWER TO DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSFORMATION: THE 60 + TAZELENME UNIVERSITY

The Turkish word “Tazelenme” may be interpreted into English as rejuvenesce, refection or regeneration. The 60 + Tazelenme University (The 60+ TU) was established under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Ismail Tufan, Head of Gerontology Department, Faculty of Health Sciences, Akdeniz University in cooperation with the National Society of Social and Applied Gerontology (NSSAG).



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This novel model of older education program derived from knowledge based on the research project entitled as Gerontology Atlas of Turkey (GeroAtlas) conducted by professor Tufan since 2000 and going to end in 2023 (Tufan, 2009, 2011; Tufan et al., 2019). In this sense, it is a social responsibility project that was initiated against the oppression of old age under stereotypes and its impact and importance can be explained by demographic changes. It can be considered as a unique implementation of University of the Third Age (U3A) since it shares some assets with French and British models but differentiate mainly with its needs oriented, flexible and pragmatic approaches (Formosa, 2014; Yazıcı & Korkmaz-Yaylagul, 2016; Tufan et al., 2018a). The development of the 60+ TU is summarised in Figure 1.

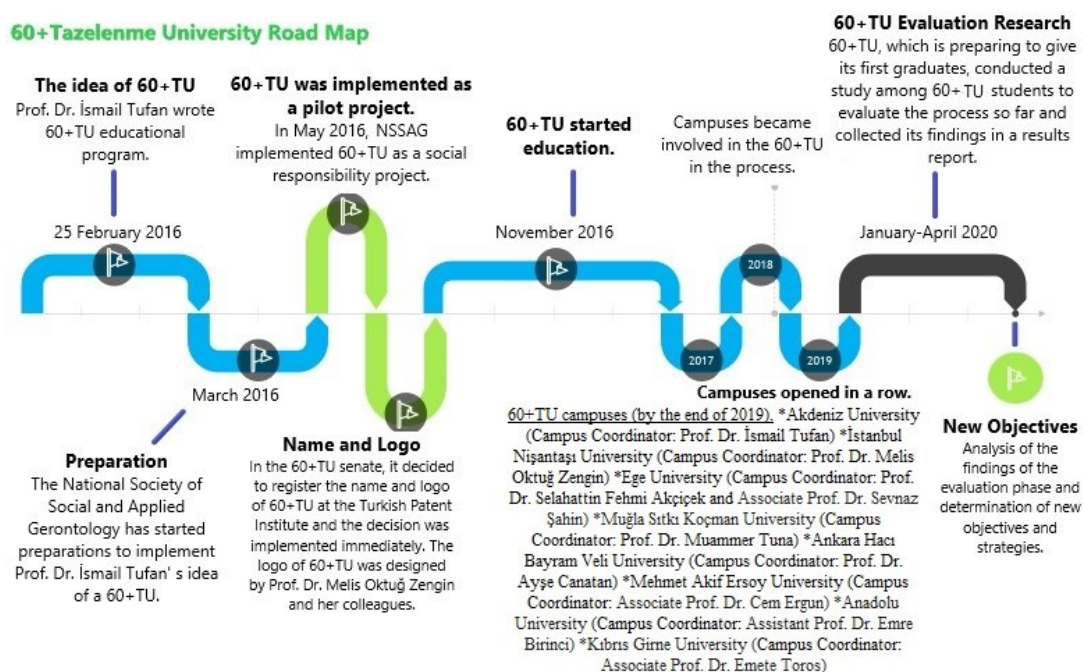


Figure 1. Road map of 60+Tazelenme University

The 60+ TU is free of charge and absolutely no fee is charged under any name as such tuition or registration fee, nor does it pay tuition fees to its lecturers. Any literate person, who is over the age of 60 or older, can attend the programme. The courses are decided on the basis of the needs of the seniors and the relevant human resources of the related university campus. Courses are given on a voluntary basis by university lecturers or by experts outside the university. Although, it includes optional courses on various subjects such as life science, health science, social science, law, and fine arts, the repairment and mechanics are compulsory for female, cooking and knitting



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classes for male students. No exams are required but it is mandatory for students to participate at least 70% of a course to succeed (Colgecen and Colgecen, 2020; Oglak and Canatan, 2020; Yavuz 2020).

It is designed as a two-dimensional older adult education model, theoretical and pragmatic (Tufan et al., 2018). Its recognition is growing not only in Turkey but also in abroad, with its approach that refutes the false discourses about old age, while bringing the action to the forefront. It opens new perspectives with the principle of lifelong learning for the older adults and the ageing with its meaningful relationships between its pragmatic goals and the theory that draws its framework (Oglak and Canatan, 2020; Colgecen and Colgecen, 2020; Yavuz 2020).

The ultimate goal of the 60+ TU is to enlighten the older people about the processes outside and inside of the social system, to prevent difficulties and relinquishments arising from their ignorance (Schnell, Hill, & Esser, 2005, p.6). To achieve this, it organises older adult education based on gerontological knowledge, and attempts to prevent the troubles and losses of individuals arising from physiological, psychic, and social changes in old age (Tufan, 2009, 2011; Tufan et al. 2018b).

It is known that our lifeline does not only go downhill during the ageing process. We have to structure old age with new knowledge, which until a few decades ago was seen only as a loss of health, skills, and social relationships. Because with the condition of mental and physical activity, we can gain earnings in advanced ages, develop in mental and psychological areas, and protect our physical skills. Based on these proven facts, the 60+ TU primarily offer education for three purposes: (i) Preservation/development of physical abilities (physiological goals), (ii) Preservation/development of cognitive abilities (psychic goals) and (iii) Protection/development of interpersonal skills (social objectives).

The 60+ TU seeks to delay, mitigate, or prevent losses due to ageing. It does not only evaluate the old age from a medical point of view but also considers its social and cultural values. Because seniors are appreciated or denied depending on cultural characteristics and judgments, e.g., "respect for the elder". The 60+ TU supports the understanding of old age culture by promoting the individual's lifelong personality development (Tufan et al. 2018c).

The students of the 60+ TU are continuously monitored, and immediate actions are taken to fulfil needs, to tackle the problems that can be solved with learning and to improve their living conditions (Ay et al. 2019; Ay & Ozgun Basibuyuk, 2020; Bahar & Basibuyuk, 2019; Tufan et al. 2020). The 60+ TU also aims to improve the spatial, social and infrastructural qualities of the



environment and the provision of sustainable conditions for an independent, task-oriented and meaningful life.

COMBATING THE CORONA VIRUS OUTBREAK

Starting point of the projects

In our ongoing projects, responsibility is the concept that is at the focal point. We divide the responsibility into individual, social and sustainable responsibilities and there is definitely at least one of these responsibilities included in the projects.

We have supported the older adults in the course of corona epidemic by implementing many new projects to strengthen their physical, psychic and social competence, to overcome changes faced, to protect and support their health and to increase participation opportunities (not just going to the streets).

The purpose and objective of the projects: stay home, but do not stay passive!

Humans are social beings, and the joy of life comes from living with others. A life repeated every day and without climaxes is followed by a feeling of emptiness and ultimately leads to a desire to give up. A dull, monotonous, boring life at home leads to despair and, worst of all, to loneliness, which is the source of the feeling of helplessness (Gillet, 1988, p. 71-72).

When it was understood that Covid-19 first threatened the lives of the seniors, a curfew was imposed on people aged 65 and over in Turkey. We have conducted research to depict the perception and mental situation of the seniors immediately (Tufan et al., 2020; Ozgun Basibuyuk et al., 2021). Based on the research outcomes, the 60+ TU executives interpreted this as the beginning of a new era, and on 13 March 2020, under the slogan of "Stay at Home, do not Stay Passive", we began to help the older adults with "Projects That Serve Hearts". We used *taze* meaning "fresh" motto when naming the projects inspired by and derived from the name of Tazelenme University. These projects are implemented and monitored online via Zoom Application and therefore called as the Distance Fresh Projects.



IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECTS DURING THE CORONA VIRUS OUTBREAK

Free distance education

A protocol has been signed between Kanal V television channel and the National Society of Social and Applied Gerontology to broadcast a “distance education” program for the 60+ TU students during the Covid-19 outbreak (Figure 2). The courses given by voluntary lecturer of on various subject are being broadcasted between 15.00-16.00 on every Wednesdays and Fridays (<http://www.kanalv.com.tr/kategori/tazelenme-universitesi/30>). There has been a great interest in the lessons and 68.000 people watched it on the first day. The magnitude of interest can be understood better considering that there are only 3090 students of the 60+ TU Antalya campus and 12.000 students in all over Turkey. Our pride multiplied when we discovered that it has been watched even in Azerbaijan.

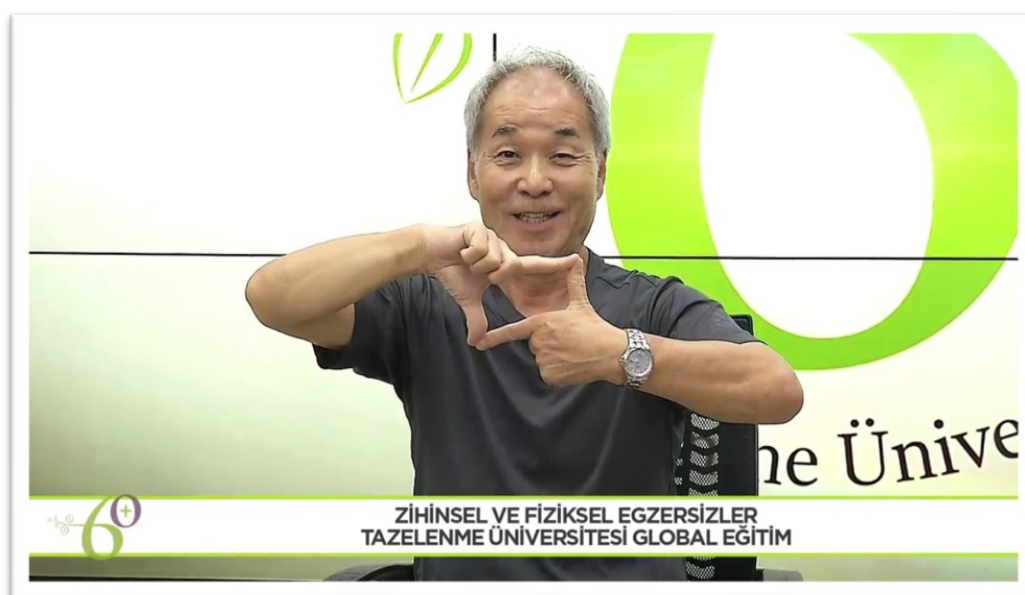


Figure 2. Mr. Hiroshi Nakajima in a mental and physical activity lesson broadcasting by Kanal V, Antalya.

Projects that save life with pencil and paper

We presented simple and practical information as a leaflet under the title of “life-saving information” within the scope of the 60+ TU home support projects. We prepared the list of important phone numbers, the medications they use, and their illnesses and placed this information



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sheet in a place where everyone can easily see it, for example on a wall. At the same time, we instructed our students to prepare a list containing names, addresses and telephone numbers of the persons to be notified in case of emergency; the list of allergies, if any; blood thinning medication, if they are using blood thinners. This list will help the healthcare personnel to assess the condition of older adult in the case of losing consciousness or fainting. In addition, they were informed to carry this life-saving information with them.

Simple effective measures against stress and depression!

People who are disconnected from social life tend to stress and depression (Ozgun Basıbuyuk et al., 2021). Their joy and enjoyment escapes, they feel worried and nervous, passivity and exhaustion, body fatigue and exhaustion dominate their lives, they see nothing that draw their attention or motivate them (Psychiatric Research Unit, WHO 1998). Our simple, costless and effective recommendations that prevent the stress of the seniors and the tendency to depression, which we know from our follow-up to a large extent are:

- Do not be a pessimist!
- Read a small part of your Holy Book, try to interpret it from your own perspective. Repetition of this every day will lead to positive thinking, hopefulness, and self-sufficiency.
- Eat a well-balanced diet, drink plenty of water, sleep regularly and do not be deprived of sunlight, for example, go out on the balcony!
- Knit, cook and share recipes with others.
- Get in touch with your loved ones on social media!
- Keep a memory notebook or a diary!
- Listen to the songs you love!
- Do not get stuck in the past!
- Adapt to the new circumstances!
- Believe that tomorrow will get better!
- Keep your mind busy with charming things!
- Regularly perform light physical activity at home every day, such as walking in the room for half an hour.



Fresh Khizir

We viewed with amazement the collapse of the health systems of countries called "strong countries" in the corona virus epidemic. Turkey has dealt quite well with the situation perhaps with support of various segments of the society. We have arranged a "Fresh Khizir" ambulance service with the financial support of sponsors to assist the central administration to some extent. The service transported the seniors to the hospital without wasting time in a few cases of emergency saving a few lives.

Fresh English

The students of AU Department of Gerontology have offered online English courses to the students of 60+ TU at home. The old and young people made simple English conversations.

Fresh food

In the 60+ TU curriculum, it is compulsory for male students to attend cooking lessons. During the corona epidemic period, "meal tariffs" were first transferred to older adults living alone. Thousands of simple, easy and quick recipes that are not restricted to Turkish cuisine were prepared and delivered to the older adults through the internet.

Fresh phone chain

We gave a new face to our old project: We created a "Fresh-Phone-Chain". The older adult who attended to the project, almost all living alone, shared their phones with each other and called each other every day. When someone participating in the telephone chain did not answer the phone, it was accepted that the "chain was broken" and their relatives or neighbours were informed to check the condition of the senior.

Fresh knitting

Some new patterns of knitting were presented online and seniors were asked to knit at least an hour each day. The main purpose of this project is to activate memory and protect motor skills.



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Fresh Corona diary

Writing activity is one of the best methods of having fruitful time and preserving and developing intelligence skills. It was encouraged that the seniors wrote down the interesting events, happenings and experiences they went through during the corona epidemic as a composition work. We have now accumulated hundreds of essays under the title of "corona diaries".

Fresh-Cocoons

First of all, we defined the houses of seniors as their protective "castle" in the "Fresh Cocoons" project to motivate them to stay at home. In order to make them feel safe, we created an "knowledge and experience" exchange where useful and practical information is conveyed in addition to other projects. We created an information market by contributing the older people to this. Those who wanted to convey their suggestions here and a communication network was established in the form of "recommendations from senior to senior".

Fresh buddies

60+ TU students are a group that already share common ideas and goals in learning. However, as in every group, there are those who think differently on different issues. Taking this into consideration, the "Fresh Buddies" project was implemented. In addition to weekly online conversations, a simple question, "Do you have any new goals after the corona epidemic?" was asked. "Common new goals" emerged from the analysis of the answers to this question as well as expression used in weekly meetings. The following projects were derived from this analysis.

POST-CORONA PROJECTS

Fresh dreams-Fresh powers

Many older adults are thinking of "pursuing new dreams" after the corona epidemic. They hope to accept the risks of life and yet minimize the risks, to store "new energy" and experience "adventure" for the rest of their lives. We will follow how this group, who wants to continue its life journey with imagination and fresh power, will go through and develop in the future.



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EvenFresh!

After the corona epidemic, many older people declared that they want to enjoy life in the full sense, saying "the real now". They are thinking of making a "fresh" entry into the new era that will begin after the epidemics. We are continuing the preparatory work for the projects that will support them in this direction.

Fresh small tastes

A group of older people who think that "little pleasures" gain new meaning and value in life during the corona epidemic process, dream of a more modest life than before after the corona epidemic. We are trying to discover what this group understands from "little pleasures". New ideas have already emerged on this subject. After the epidemic, we will put efforts to create the conditions that allow this group to access "little pleasures" that will add meaning and value to their life.

Fresh basis-Fresh means

The corona epidemic has once again revealed the links of old age with the basis and meaning. A group among the older adults seek "new basis and meaning" for themselves after the epidemic. These older people express that they were disappointed during the epidemic period and that they were left alone by their social environment. For this reason, they have the desire to create a new social environment for themselves after the epidemic. We are planning new strategies in this regard.

Fresh protective normality

We see that the concepts of "protection and normality" changed for almost all older people. We developed the concept of "protective normality" from the expressions they used. We are preparing new initiatives that will add depth to the concept of protective normality after the corona epidemic. We assume that protective normality will be one of the determining factors in the life of the older adults for the future.



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Fresh old-young solidarity

During the corona virus epidemic, we have taken new steps, which we call "meeting of young and older adults". Initial experiences were positive, for example the "English course" project was a good example of young and old solidarity practice with high attendance. "New meeting opportunities" are required that will enable the proliferation of intergenerational solidarity. It is possible to bring young and old generations together in many living areas. But it is necessary to structure and activate them.

IMPORTANCE OF 60+ TAZELENME UNIVERSITY AS RIGHTS-BASED CITIZENSHIP AND OLDER PEOPLE'S RIGHTS

Even though there are many similar and different concepts of older education in Europe, Asia, and the Pacific, the focus of lifelong learning is similar. To adapt to the changing world, lifelong education also promises secondary benefits such as increasing the representation of individuals in their societies and the world, supporting their right to self-determination and getting their rightful share from developing technology in the context of rights-based citizenship. Especially during the pandemic period, digital adaptation, which enables the older people to meet their service demands, financial controls, and health and care needs, constitutes an important part of the education curricula for the older people. It is seen in the example of 60+ Tazelenme University how geragogic (gerontological education field) education activities are beneficial on days when the right of the older people to communicate, socialize, and have freedom of movement is not physically possible.

Contrary to some socio-economic changes that reduce the visibility of the older people and cause them to be excluded from society, education at an advanced age can offer many solutions. As a result of the transformational power of education in old age, learning can help the older people to be a guide in front of other generations in terms of participation in employment activities, dynamism and openness to change, which determine the "value of being an individual" in the modern world. The validity of this argument can also be seen in the Fresh Buddies application highlighted at 60+ Tazelenme University. At this point, instead of an advocacy-based approach with a paternal point of view, in which the rights of the older people are shaped by passively addressing them, older people can become a niche population that has the right to be supported in the realization of



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themselves, with the power of representation, inclusiveness, contribution and being active, which are at the center of rights-based citizenship of older people.

Another important thing to note is that aging is, in a way, a cumulative average of all the multifaceted and comprehensive experiences we have acquired during our lifetime. In this respect, although education at an advanced age creates an important opportunity for the defense of the rights of the older people and serves a more equal society, it should not be forgotten that some social effects and discriminations in the society should be included in the equation as a confounding factor in all these services.

To eliminate this discrimination, 60+ Tazelenme University provides education with an approach that eliminates many risk factors such as income, gender, elitism-related inclusion and exclusion mechanisms, by allowing every older person who volunteers, complies with the age limit, abides by the attendance rules, and does their practical homeworks, to receive free education. It draws attention to the point of the rights-based approach not to favor a vulnerable group of people, but to be aware of the social reality in which they live. Because as Formosa (2019: p.263) states:

“Moreover, as third age universities refrain from engaging in age-related advocacy, they create a ‘neutral’ space for the practice of older adult learning, which ultimately functions as an arena for the safeguarding and protection of a third age lifestyle.”

When the literature is examined, it is seen that the social class they belong to throughout their lives affects the possibility of participating in educational activities, and these opportunities determine the probability of skipping a grade. In other words, the situation of the older people who want to continue this habit as a chance to have a good education and the older people who have a disadvantage in participating in educational institutions throughout their life and meet with educational opportunities thanks to services such as 60+ Tazelenme University are different. Adapting both social cohesion, education curriculum, and teaching techniques in a more fair and equitable way depends on this situation not being overlooked.

Also, gender-based roles and pressures in Turkish society, which are more evident, especially in the youth of the now older generation, and change over time, albeit at a limited rate, prevent older women from even going to primary education to a large extent, reducing the rate of older women who can go to university to almost zero. Another thing observed among the older people who applied to 60+ Tazelenme University is the motivation and willingness of the older women to overcome this educational disadvantage, as well as the response of applied courses that go beyond gender roles. So much so that the social structure in which gender roles oblige men to



manage the home and domestic labor with women with extra-home responsibilities causes women and men to experience different risks in self-sustainability in old age. The risk of needing care, which is the basis of the rights of the elderly, is directly and indirectly related to this situation. Therefore, thanks to gender-equal applied courses, both empowering older people and maintaining gender equality are supported.

In particular, Laslett emphasized that in the case of senior universities in Australia, tertiary education institutions do not include older people with mobility and cognitive difficulties. It is an irony because senior universities base their outreach work on Laslett's (1989: 4) definition of the 'third age', which is 'after the second stage of independence, maturity, responsibility, acquisition and thrift, and the fourth age of ultimate dependence, attrition and death. However, the education rights of the older people, whose need for support and care increases relatively in the fourth age period, and their participation in education opportunities should also be discussed separately in the field of older people's education. There are many issues that need to be studied on the basis of equality and rights in advanced age education, from the transportation of advanced age education institutions to accessible service plans suitable for their diseases.

The risk, which can be considered both the cause and the result of this situation, is one of the most important weapons to prevent ageism and the possibility that education opportunities for the older people, which is a requirement of human rights, is a risk that internalizes age discrimination.

As a result of studies on older university students around the world, it is seen that in some cases these people also use their educational activities to reject the labels of aging and to attribute negative meanings to age. While such a stance may seem positive from an advocacy point of view, it is also somewhat harmful. Likewise, aging is a natural process, aging is a natural period of life, and reconciling with this process and preventing gerontophobia should be included in the basic ideology of educational activities in order to protect the rights and well-being of the older people (Robbins-Ruszkowski, 2017: 2019).

CONCLUSION

The main purpose of the project implemented during the corona virus outbreak was to improve the quality of life of the older adults, to help them discover new meanings in their lives and to go through the active ageing process. The Tazelenme University aims to ensure that seniors maintain the knowledge, skills and abilities that enable them to respond appropriately to the



Quaestio Iuris., Rio de Janeiro, Vol. 15, N.03., 2022- Dossiê Demetrio de Falerio y la sociedad de envejecimiento- Coordenação Dr. Alejandro Klein, 2022, p. 1752 – 1771.

Gulusan Ozgun Basibuyuk, Ozlem Ozgur, Fatma Sila Ayan, Barkın Dere, Nilufer Korkmaz Yaylagul, Ismail Tufan

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changing conditions in the environment, and to continue their development by gaining new knowledge, skills and abilities.

“Learning is rowing against the current, whoever leaves the shovels decline” Confucius said centuries ago. Despite all the justified criticisms in combating epidemics countrywide, we have managed to deal with the epidemic with the least damage to older adults by implementing the online projects. The projects we have developed and implemented during the corona virus epidemic are not only related to the concept of "respect for the older adult", but also to see readily the benefits and profits obtained from them as a society.

A negative perception on older people has become evident in this period (Tufan et al., 2020). One of the measures taken against the coronavirus epidemic in Turkey is to impose a curfew for the older adults. The tendencies observed in social media and society, before and after the restriction, made the impression that the seniors were chosen as the scapegoat for the coronavirus epidemic. However, the older people were acknowledged as people who transfer knowledge and experience from generation to generation in all cultures for centuries. This reflects that learning and knowledge do not come from formal school education. Humans begin to learn as soon as they are born, and the learning process continues throughout life. Thus, the need for learning is independent of age and knowledge transfer does not depend on the age and physical characteristics of an individual.

However, every good idea and initiative lives and dies depending on opportunities provided. Ideas and projects born during this period can survive and inseminate into society, as well as may turn into dead ideas in a short time due to lack of opportunities. We are in support of these ideas to stay alive and have hope for supports, opportunities and chances for them to succeed.

Education in advanced age is a current opportunity that unites generations and ensures the continuity of sustainable development, and should also be considered as a social policy that strengthens the rights of the older people and their right to self-determination. In this respect, more inclusive and supportive education policies for older people are also a necessity for human rights and the rights of the older population.

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Gulusan Ozgun Basibuyuk, Ozlem Ozgur, Fatma Sila Ayan, Barkın Dere, Nilufer Korkmaz Yaylagul, Ismail Tufan

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Gulusan Ozgun Basibuyuk, Ozlem Ozgur, Fatma Sila Ayan, Barkın Dere, Nilufer Korkmaz Yaylagul, Ismail Tufan

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