



CINAGE - European Cinema for Active Ageing

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Abstract

As a response to Europe's demographic ageing and the consequently increasing of social stigma about older people, four European countries – Portugal, Slovenia, Italy and United Kingdom – came together to develop CINAGE – European Cinema for Active Ageing (Project No.: 538672-LLP-1-2013-1-PT-GRUNDTVIG-GMP), a project that offers a new approach on learning for active ageing through film practices and shared cinematographic experiences. CINAGE ultimately aims at producing, testing and validating a package of film-oriented tools and learning strategies that will be the base for a cinema course for elders, culminating in the production of 12 short films by citizens of the specified age group, by 2015. Alongside with fomenting critical thinking and self-reflection methodologies, CINAGE's innovative character is its andragogical dimension, since it will engage the elderly with filmmaking practices to creatively explore their age experiences, and thus promote a change in mentalities towards achieving a more active ageing.

The CINAGE project (www.cinageproject.eu) is a Grundtvig multilateral project, supported by the EU Lifelong Learning Programme. This publication reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. All the information contained in this paper are the results of the combined efforts from the four CINAGE partners.

1. The CINAGE research

The purpose of the CINAGE Project (www.cinageproject.eu) is to produce, test and validate a course targeted towards senior populations in the EU. The Project is developed by four partners, the lead partner being Portugal and the three other partners Italy, Slovenia and the UK. The Course was based firstly upon a review of approaches towards the six competencies, identified by the EU as significant in developing policy towards active ageing within the EU and, secondly, upon a review of European Cinema. The two reviews sought to provide an overarching review of attitudes towards active ageing, based upon a review of the literature on active ageing in the four partner countries, as well as an assessment of the popular stereotypes that can be discerned in European cinema. Central to the development of the course has been self-reflection based upon, initially, the review of cinema, and developed by members of the Focus Groups selected by each partner to review European cinema. The Course itself focused upon developing short films, whilst the selection of the six feature films that make up the CINAGE course package provided a starting platform for continuing self-reflection by Course participants.

1.1 Active Ageing and Learning for Active Ageing

The European Commission identified active and healthy ageing as a very important area. A structured critical literature review used evidence from 2000 onwards, across UK, Italy, Slovenia and Portugal. The review considered six competencies for active ageing: Learning; Civic and Community; Health; Emotional; Financial/Economic; Technological, in EU, national, and regional (Umbria) contexts.

Rising life expectancy across the four countries poses challenges: in Portugal the population aged 65+ is projected to rise from 19.5% in 2011 to 35.72% in 2050; in Slovenia the proportion aged 65+ is expected to rise from 24.8% in 2020 to 33.5% in 2059, in Umbria, the population aged 65+ currently totals 23.2%, and in the UK 2030 there will be 51% more people aged 65+ compared to 2010. The four areas in the 2012 European Year for Active Ageing are employment, social participation, independent, healthy and secure living; and enabling environment (EU, 2013). Underlying principles include sustaining a balanced life-course process; positive definitions; inclusiveness; multi-dimensional and empowering approaches.

A lifecourse learning approach is vital, considering diversity, citizenship, creative leisure, relationships, resilience, and removing structural barriers. Strengths of U3As can be expanded through effective partnerships and activating other learning sectors. Portugal emphasized joining up different policies,



public and private initiatives, principles of autonomy, participation, self-fulfillment and dignity, action for caregivers and developing more participatory and learning spaces. Slovenia emphasised the need for formal and informal education towards knowledge, culture and self-realisation, dialogue between different older ages, and passing knowledge across generations. Older age needs a holistic, less medicalised approach, considering the balance between happy and productive later life. Gender issues need attention. Lifelong education requires more flexible transitions from work. Italy recommended a professional qualification of expert in lifelong learning; and further training for work-retirement transitions. Older people's increasing commitment to volunteering needs to be seen as a strength. The UK recommended including older learners in educational planning, affordable courses, increasing pre-retirement training, challenging inequalities, developing opportunities to fit volunteering with informal care and leisure interests, and promoting health through peer networks. An empowering, strengths based focus is needed, respecting the variety and resources of older people. Finally, society needs challenging imaginatively to rethink older age.

1.2 European Cinema Review

The central element of the CINAGE Project is to explore the way in which contemporary European Cinema reflects the six competencies and this research was conducted in parallel to the research into active ageing and learning. Focus Groups of up to twelve members were based upon cross-section of gender and age ranges from 55 – 60+, and selection was based upon people who were people involved in active learning, either as participants or providers, and experts European Cinema.

Apart from the specific requirements that each film should reflect as many of the six competencies as possible, the films selected had to have sub-titles in the appropriate languages. Each partner screened a large number of films either via national and international film databases or through viewing before arriving at the final selection of the three films nominated. The films selected for viewing were: *Amour* (France), *Saraband* (Sweden), *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* (UK), *Mid-August Lunch* (Italy), *Night Boats* (Croatia) *Good to Go* (Slovenia), *Vidage Perdu* (Belgium), *Cloud 9* (Germany), *A Lady in Paris*, (France), *Empties* (Czech Republic), *Before Twilight* (Poland) and *Elsa and Fred* (Spain).

Each partner country held two full meetings of the Focus Groups, an initial one that introduced members to each other and to the CINAGE project itself. The approach towards reviewing films were also discussed. After the viewing period, an intensive month during which each member of the Focus Group was required to watch and provide comment upon twelve films, a Final Meeting was held.

The final meeting considered not only the general response of the group towards the films, but also a discussion about the process of review and response to the CINAGE Project. Discussions included responses to the six competencies as well as to the way in which the competencies were portrayed. Discussions also included comments on the relevance of the six competencies to the member's own lives and experience.

There was considerable difference of opinion on certain films throughout the various partner focus groups and after some discussion it was felt that the fairest way of arriving at the final selection of six films would be to add up the scores given to the films by each Focus Group Member in each of the partner countries. The six films selected were: (1) *Vidange Perduu/ The Only One* (2006) Dir: Geoffrey Enthoven. Belgium – (2) *Vratné lahve/ Empties* (2007) Dir: Jan Sverák, Czech Republic, UK, Denmark – (3) *Srecen za umret/ Good To Go* (2013) Dir: Matevz Luzar. Slovenia, Croatia. – (4) *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* (2011); Dir: John Madden, UK, USA, United Arab Emirates – (5) *Jeszcze nie wieczór/Before Twilight* (2008) Dir: Jacek Bławut. Poland – (6) *Pranzo di ferragosto/Mid-August Lunch* (2008) Dir: Gianni Di Gregorio: Italy.

1.3 Conclusion of the research

The review of active ageing literature and policy within the EU recognised firstly the considerable differences between various countries in the EU with, for example, retirement age in Slovenia starting at 55, whilst in the UK retirement age is being raised to 67. The demographic changes, that in each country see a rapidly ageing population, means that the value of a life-course approach towards adult learning is important because of its potential to develop a holistic multi-dimensional understanding of: active ageing; considering citizenship; creative leisure; rewarding relationships; resilience and adaptability and the removal of structure barriers concerning poverty and inequality. The ageing population in all countries is a significant challenge to social agendas and policies, requiring public and private initiatives to meet changing needs.

The review of European Cinema, and its depiction of the six competencies, similarly found variations in all four partner countries, although there was general agreement that all six competencies were



essential in terms of the wellbeing of active agers. There was concern that the economic wellbeing of senior agers was not particularly well reflected. Conversely however, the value of community engagement, emotional wellbeing and, in particular, the ability to adapt to new technologies and ability to continue to learn, was highlighted in the films that were selected for the CINAGE package. Focus Group members found the idea of the CINAGE project extremely valuable and felt that the course proposal had the potential to contribute significantly towards senior citizens being able to provide, and disseminate, their own reflections upon the needs and benefits of active ageing.

2. The CINAGE Course and Package

Based on the results of the research on active ageing and the European cinema review, a plan to produce the contents for the training modules/units was agreed by the project partners, as well as the structure, methodology, strategy and resources for the national pilots of the CINAGE course.

The CINAGE course offered (older) participants an opportunity to reflect upon cinema and films and to experience collaborative activities triggering significant and transformative learning about a more active, healthy and socially engaged living and ageing.

From November 2014 to March 2015, in all the partner countries, partners organized and piloted training courses developed according to andragogic principles and process models (Malcom Knowles).

The course was primarily meant for adult educators and older learners. The main methods were: short theoretical input, peer work, group discussion, group reporting, workshop, collaborative learning etc.

The participants had the chance to reflect upon the concept of active ageing in relation to topics dealt with in recent European films. Further, the learners have been dynamically involved in shooting their own shortfilms about ageing, identifying possible strategies for a more active, healthy and socially engaged ageing.

The 73-hours course was composed of the following modules:

1. Introduction: Let's Get into the CINAGE Course
2. Self-assessment: My active ageing story...
3. Active ageing and adult education: Did you say old age? Did you say active ageing?
4. Film screenings and analysis: European cinema and active ageing
5. Filmmaking: Personal narratives, Screenwriting, Directing, Producing, Editing short-films
6. Cinema Workshop: 3 short movies in 30 hours!

2.1 The 12 CINAGE short movies on active ageing

As a result of the national pilots, 12 short movies on active ageing has been produced in collaboration between the learners and the educators, with the external support of a technical team in each country, and they will be available through the project's website www.cinageproject.eu.

The movies will be also presented in occasion of the Final international conference of the project in Leeds, next 17-18 July 2015, together with the CINAGE Package that includes all the other major project's products: the CINAGE learning manual, the CINAGE guide for adult educators, 6 strategies to cope with active ageing, etc.

The three short movies produced in Portugal are:

1. Dia Claro (Brightday)
A former revolutionary, disappointed with current situation in his country, committed again with life and finds out that an ideal never dies.
2. ... Daqui a 20 Anos (... 20 Years from Now)
When returning to her grandmother's house, a recent retired woman discovers her past and how her life will be 20 years from now.
3. 1X2
After the death of his wife, a retired man is looking for a new love. But the crossroads of love sometimes surprise us...
Active ageing competencies: Learning; Emotional.



The three short movies produced in Slovenia are:

1. Lemon Dance
Adi has been selling fruits at the open air market in Ljubljana for quite a long time. He is a silent and shameful man focused on his work. He has been in love with Vera, a steady customer of his. But will he have the courage to make a step forward in this relationship?
2. Joy
There are older people, each of them appearing in a different window frame and displaying a different ability and interest. There is a window cleaner, a painter, a retired teacher of French reading *Le Monde*, there is a lady consulting her English dictionary, and yet another lady taking care of her pot plants and there is an accordion player playing *Comparcita*.
3. The Right to Adventure
Marija is an older lady in love with adrenaline and life. She is a student of photography, geography and painting. Moreover, she has been active as a volunteer in different organizations. She and her friends, decided to cycle down to Albania, but a problem pops up: her husband does not agree with her plans and she herself is under the pressure of her inner imperatives.

The three short movies produced in the United Kingdom are:

1. Trapped
Ray has been visiting his daughter and is all set to get a taxi to the station for his journey home...but nothing goes to plan as his stay turns out to be much longer than expected. His first mistake is not checking he can get out of the big front door before posting the keys back through his friend's letterbox.
2. Swan song
Henry has had enough of being treated in hospital by uncaring staff and rather than just gradually just die "in care" decides to take control of his end. He has a final "blast" viewed by his lifetime partner and love of his life Min. After a fond farewell he departs this life on a magnificent red bike to be carried off to his next life transported by a Swan.
3. Swimming Pool
The fantasy of Cranach's 16th century painting is fast-forwarded to a scene in a swimming pool today. Male teenagers ignore Daisy, an older female swimmer but admire the body and the diving prowess of Sally, an attractive young woman. Sadly this pool cannot rejuvenate the older woman but she has the pleasurable experience of being recognized by Sally whom she had once taught. Sally is now a published writer. Both women recognize the expertise of the other and Daisy feels that she has succeeded in passing on her skills as a writer to the next generation. She is still the same age, her body has lost its appeal but she has had a positive effect on the young and keeps going!

The three short movies produced in Italy are:

1. Barone (Baron)
"Baron" is the nickname given to Gigi when, many years ago, was the top scorer in the league. Now, coaching a youth team, which is preparing to compete in the final to win the title. During the final Gigi discovers that the young champion who scored the decisive goal, is playing the last game. Gigi also the championship final is the last game ...
2. Problemi di cuore (Hearth problems)
Ernesto discovers of being sick and tired. The recommended treatment is to do it out of the pain of the loss of his wife. A friend encouraged him to go dancing in the dance hall to have fun and find companionship. On that occasion, the packaging of the tablets becomes the means to approach the new love of life ...
3. Condominio (Condominium)
In the building, people are afraid for a ghost "trans" who wanders at night. Marisa, however, opens the door to all and organizes musical evenings and "spicy" curry with foreign friends from various backgrounds. Friendship wins on prejudice.