CEDAC
Creative educators of digital arts & culture

SYNTHESIS REPORT

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

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Project consortium

P1	PL	Fundacja Mapa Pasji	Fundacja Mapa Pasji
P2	GR	AINTEK SYMVOULOI EPICHEIRISEON EFARMOGES YPSILIS TECHNOLOGIAS EKPAIDEFSI ANONYMI ETAIREIA	idec
P3	CZ	OSTRAVSKA UNIVERZITA	OSTRAVSKÁ UNIVERZITA
P4	PT	Associação Rede de Universidades da Terceira Idade	RUTIS A REDE QUE UNE AS UNIVERSIDADES SENIORES
P5	PL	Fundacja Rozwoju przez Całe Życie	FUNDACJA ROZWOJU PRZEZ CAŁE ŻYCIE
P6	CY	A & A EMPHASYS INTERACTIVE SOLUTIONS LTD	Emphasys CENTRE

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1.Introduction

1.1 Objective and scope of the research

The objective of the research is to collect data related to seniors' education system, as well as to understand better what sort of content and methods are needed in seniors' education especially in small cities and in the countryside where access to different types of courses and classes is limited. The research was conducted both among seniors and seniors' educators in order to better understand barriers, challenges and interests of both groups, which will help to create a useful educational programme within the CEDAC project.

The research developed report includes three main parts: desktop research, the results of an online survey and the main outcomes of the conduction of two focus group sessions.

The objectives of the report are various but they mainly focus on the identification of the current situation in regards to the education provided to seniors, their needs, and how creativity, arts, and culture can be included in their curriculum. The final aim is to understand both the views of seniors and adult educators to help the adult educators improve seniors' creative and digital skills. By doing so, seniors will become more socially included.

The research has been done by "CEDAC" project partners:

- in the Czech Republic by University of Ostrava
- in Cyprus by A & A Emphasys Interactive Solutions Ltd
- in Greece by IDEC S.A.
- in Poland by the Map of Passions Foundation
- in Portugal by RUTIS – Universities of the Third Age Network Association

The synthesis report presents all the collected data in a synthetic form, allowing us to conclude designing an efficient and adequate training programme for seniors.

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1.2 Methodology

The entire partnership performed the research in the same way. It was divided into 3 stages: desk research, online survey, and focus groups.

Desk research

The desk research was done mostly on the Internet, based on the knowledge collected by our organizations while implementing projects addressed to seniors and adult educators, but also in close collaboration with students in the area of gerontology and lifelong learning.

We were searching various online resources such as websites of official entities which provide statistical data, scientific documents, articles, research reports, official letters, bibliographic references, newspapers, etc. Some of the information comes from internal materials of the University of Ostrava.

Online survey

The consortium developed two online surveys, one for seniors and one for adult educators.

Many participants were invited to fill in the survey through personal contacts. In Poland, both seniors and educators were also invited through e-mails, Facebook posts, etc. In the Czech Republic, mostly seniors who attend U3A courses and teachers who are or have been involved in U3A teaching were contacted. Regarding the questionnaire for seniors, the wider public was also addressed, both through personal contact and through social media. The teachers who fill in the survey were all involved in U3A education at the University of Ostrava. In Cyprus and Greece questionnaires were shared internally between colleagues as well as with their families and friends. In Greece IDEC's contacts were used too. In Portugal, surveys were addressed to the educators and seniors of the Senior University of Fundão, a small town in the interior of the country.

The questionnaires were translated into national languages (except teachers in the Czech Republic, who received the English version) and distributed via Google Forms. In some places, educators printed the surveys out and seniors filled them out on paper (some seniors wouldn't be able to fill in an online survey themselves). Then the answers were typed in the online survey.

Focus groups

Each partner invited a group of adult educators or adult educators and seniors – 5 to 10 people selected based on their diversity of study areas, experience, expertise, and interests – to meet and discuss their needs, ideas, challenges, and barriers. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation most

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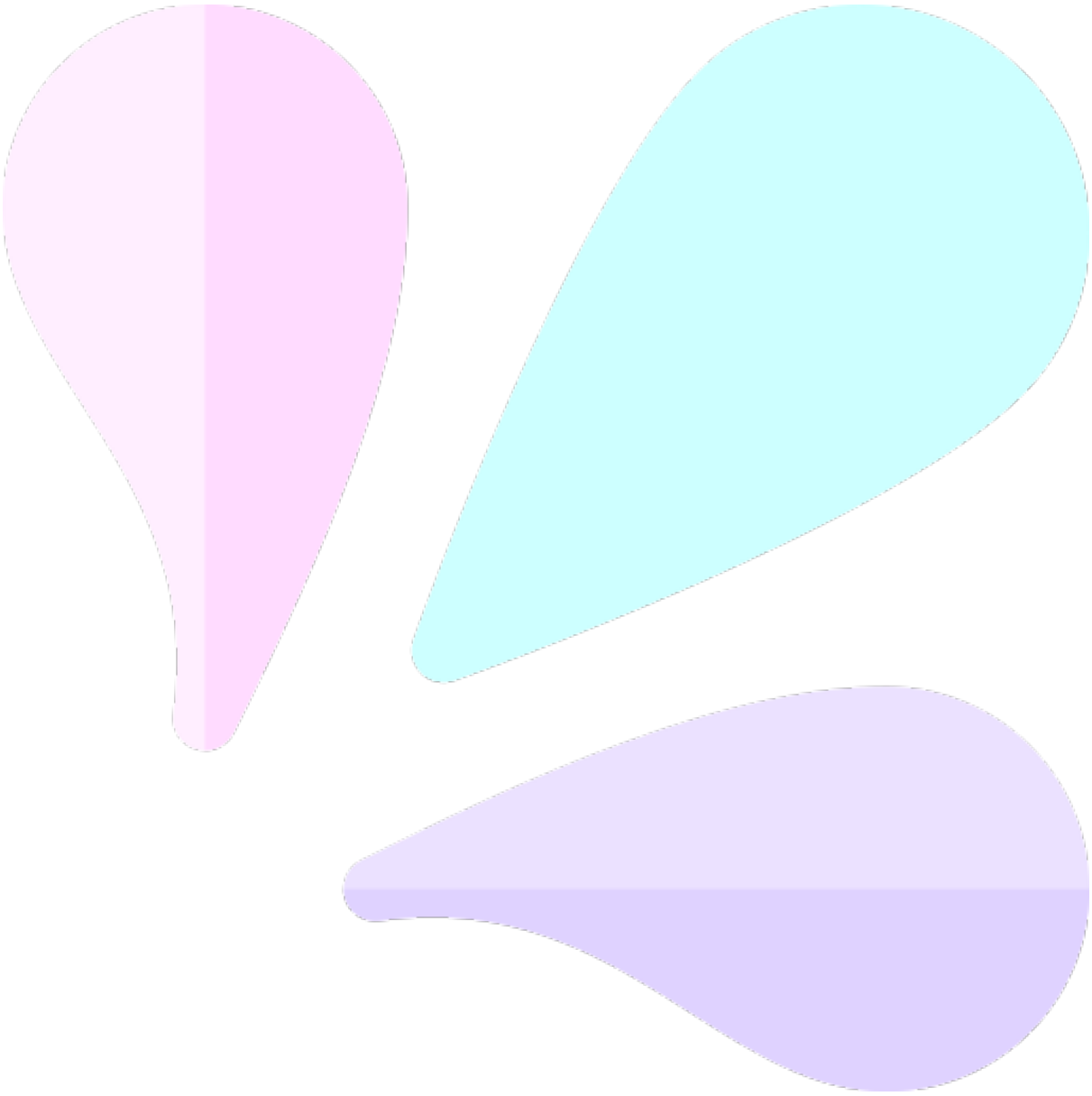
meetings were held via the Internet, using video conferencing software such as Zoom Meetings and Microsoft Teams. During these sessions (one or two, depending on the country), some questions were planned, some improvised, based on the discussion. After this face-to-face meeting, we finalize our report.



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2. Desk Research Results

2.1 General situation in seniors' education

The general information about seniors' education is presented country by country:

Cyprus

The EU population over the age of 65 was in 2020 at 20.6% of the whole EU population, 3 percentage points higher than the corresponding share a decade earlier. In Cyprus, the percentage was in 2020 at 16.3% compared to 16.1% in 2019 and at 12.7% in 2011. Almost all studies show that this rate will rise, not only for Cyprus but for the whole EU population since the life expectancy is higher and birth rates are low. Yet, right now, despite the increase, Cyprus is still one of the EU countries with a comparatively low share of elderly people since the highest shares were observed in Italy (23.2%), Greece, and Finland (both at 22.3%) (Charalambous, 2021).

When it comes to lifelong learning opportunities, Cyprus is a country that has a clear vision to define an integrated strategy for all kinds/types of learning at all levels with the aim to create an inclusive society of skilful citizens. Regarding seniors, there is the emphasis given by Ministries and organizations to improve their quality of life and include them in society, yet there is not a specific policy focus on this specific target group. The Cyprus Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth has adopted many initiatives for adults and lifelong learning opportunities for them, and seniors are not excluded *(more information given in the following part – 2.2. Stakeholders).*

Moreover, the Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare in collaboration with the Cyprus Sports Organization, promote and improve the initiative of the Cyprus Third Age Observatory for the provision of exercise lesson with the aim of seniors' healthy lifestyle. The slogan of this initiative is «Κανένας μόνος», meaning "No one is alone", and all three organizations promise to never let the elderly alone without the help they need (Offsite, 2021). Furthermore, many organizations, private centres, and NGOs offer seniors informal education and training and are promoting lifelong learning opportunities. The place of culture and arts is a rather less frequent topic in regards to the training of the elderly, yet it is not absent. Many informal pieces of training define and offer culture and arts in more informal ways such as activities and excursions, leaving the more formal form of classes for language learning, digital skills, and other theoretical topics.

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All these actions and initiatives are part of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, which offers a bold agenda for handling the issue of ageing in the 21st century. It includes many aspects such as advances in health, supportive environments, care of the older citizens and it suggests many ways for governmental and non-governmental organizations on how to make their societies more welcoming and inclusive for seniors (United Nations). Cyprus has developed a document based on this Action Plan, which also includes what is offered to seniors in terms of education, yet, an official document that focuses only on this aspect has not been developed.

In regards to the difference between rural and urban areas in Cyprus, things are quite complicated. The concepts of urban and rural areas are used and understood on a daily basis by almost everyone. However, not a clear and exact definition can be given due to each country's particularities and characteristics. According to Urban-rural typology for Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics (NUTS), Cyprus is an intermediate country, meaning that its population that lives in rural areas is between 20 and 50%. 33% of the island's population lived in these areas in 2020 which corresponds to 400 605 people. In addition, there is not a big distinction between a village, a town, or a city in Cyprus, making it complicated to differentiate them.

The economically active population of rural areas tends to move to urban areas to find better job opportunities (Finn, 2019). Yet, it is difficult for older people to move from one place to the other, even if the distance between them on a small island like Cyprus is not long. There are some Adult Education Centres in rural areas providing free education to adults, including seniors, but the choices of classes are more limited than in cities.

Czech Republic

On 31 December 2020, the Czech Republic had 10 650 th. inhabitants, out of whom 2 130 th. are seniors aged 65+ (20 %).[1]

In the first half of the 21st century, the proportion of people aged 65 and over will roughly double according to all demographic scenarios. Their number is expected to peak at 3.2 million at the end of the 2050s, compared with the present 2.13 million. Seniors will thus be the only part of the population that will grow in numbers. The average age of the Czech population will then increase from 41.3 years to 50.0 years. The old-age index will increase significantly in the future. It will peak on 1 January 2063, when there are expected to be 277 seniors per 100 children (2019: 113 seniors). The situation where

[1] Czech Statistical Office - Citizens

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there will be 2.5 times more seniors than children is expected to last throughout the second half of the century. Up to a third of the population will be aged 65 and over.

Several organizations in the country offer various educational activities for seniors. The most important platform for the education of seniors are the Universities of the Third Age. The Czech Government approved the "National Action Plan for Positive Ageing for the Period 2017-2025" (NAP), which states that although the Czech Republic has a well-established U3A system, the demand for the offered education still exceeds the offer. This type of senior education primarily focuses on interest education. Even though its outputs are not acceptable on the labour market, they have a positive benefit in the personal development of seniors as well as increase their active participation in society. This NAP defined a strategic objective: Increasing the ratio of seniors engaged in interest education through U3A concerning local accessibility. It also states: To update municipalities and regions on the benefits of U3A by dissemination and best-practice examples. Universities of the Third Age are united in the U3A Association. The general assembly of the U3A Association members approved the "Long-Term Strategic Plan for Senior Education Development at universities in the Czech Republic in the period 2021-2025", which takes grounds in the "Long-Term Strategic Plan for Educational, Scientific Research, Development and Innovative, Artistic and Other Creative Activities in the Area of Tertiary Education for the Period 2021-2025" and other documents of the Government Legislative Council for seniors and ageing population and from resolutions of the Government of the Czech Republic.

National strategy comes out from these documents:

- National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic
- Long-Term Plan for Education and the Development of the Educational System of the CR
- Human Resources Development Strategy in the CR
- The Strategy of Lifelong Learning in the CR

For all seniors' educational activities there is a crucial point that the Czech government supports seniors' education through funding Universities of the third age. This financial support covers the majority of expenses and seniors pay only a symbolic amount of money as tuition. As for now, there are 44 Universities of the Third Age (U3A) united in an Association in the Czech Republic. Each U3A offers many semesterly courses from different areas like natural sciences, social sciences, medicine, technics, informatics, art, culture, etc. The state of the educational programs for U3A in the Czech Republic was analyzed in December 2019. According to this research, participants were most interested in courses:

- natural and cultural monuments with excursion,

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- geography,
- medicine – health – security,
- economy – finances,
- physics – mathematics – natural sciences,
- psychology – sociology – other social sciences,
- visual art – music – artistic profession,
- history – philosophy,
- information technology: computers – internet – smartphones,
- media – communication,
- sports, games, recreation, dance,
- theatre, film,
- politics, law,
- languages,
- environment,
- agriculture – gardening – animal care,
- memory practising,
- others: tourism, textile production, lectures of doctors.

As a method, we prefer an inclusive educational environment. We consider this primarily in removing barriers to senior education caused by their age, health condition, social and economic situation. It also concerns, among others, architectural and information barriers, barriers given by the financial situation of seniors, their difficult possibility of commuting, lowered communication ability given by, for example, health disabilities, etc.

The situation in big cities and villages is much different. Large cities with universities have Universities of the Third Age (U3A), which offer a wide range of educational programs for seniors. The offerings are presented to the public in a clear way and seniors have enough information to decide whether they want to attend a U3A or which educational programme to choose. In villages and small towns, there are usually no such options, with occasional courses mostly focusing on computer and financial literacy, or language courses. Thus, villagers have no choice but to commute to the city where the university is located for their education. Just to give you an idea, here is a list of towns with a university and, therefore, U3As: Prague, Brno, Ostrava, Opava, Karviná, Liberec, Hradec Králové, Ústí nad Labem, České Budějovice, Olomouc, Pardubice, Zlín, Jindřichův Hradec, Jihlava, Plzeň.

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Only the U3As involved in the Association have systematic support from the Ministry of Education. To improve the accessibility of educational activities for seniors from smaller towns and villages, many U3As have adapted their offer to include distance and combined courses. Some courses are offered online.

The pandemic situation has forced many universities to adapt their courses and strengthen the role of distance education. The feedback we got from seniors was that they very much welcomed this change, the opportunity to attend distance courses was one of the few ways for them to socialise. Even after the end of the pandemic and the introduction of normal university regimes, interest in distance education has persisted. As already mentioned, this form minimizes barriers and allows even those seniors who would not be able to attend full-time classes to be educated.

The question is how to improve the offer of education to seniors in smaller towns and villages. Here we have high hopes for the project.

Greece

Greece has the second oldest population among European countries. Studies show that the Greek population will grow older as one in three people will be aged over 65 in 2050.

Loneliness, rising diseases rates, depression in addition to the weak pension system, are blowing up the quality of life of elder citizens. Women are specifically excluded from research and official statistics. This fact can be the result of the invisible presence of women in the social and political environment in Greece and of the patriarchal system which lacks the management of women protection.

Information about the living conditions of seniors in Greece is likely to be non-existent. The lack of concrete and serious studies and statistics on the care and needs for elderly people, essential to be able to formulate health policies as well as policies for the care of the elderly is problematic.

In Greece senior education does not take part in any institutions specifically, however, some programs are available for any age including the third age. Some associations are developing education for elderly people but compared to other European countries which are developing Universities of the third age this sector is poorly supported at a national level.

National strategies and official documents are mainly inexistent in Greece, most of the senior's education is developed at a European level for Greece. The funding is often acquired by European projects such as the **Age platform** Europe regrouping many countries including Greece.

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Age platform works at a European level to promote order's people rights and interest, with European and non-European bodies. The platform develops projects for elder people to reduce inequalities and provide healthy ageing, communicating with age-friendly environments and activities.

It also shares the development of **lifelong learning** and its future objectives.

As Greece connects its policies and objectives with the ones of the European Union, lifelong learning is a national policy priority, as its strong connection with employment, economic prosperity and full participation of the individual in society is clear. Especially in the context of the current economic crisis, lifelong learning is a crucial factor for growth and social cohesion.

With the enactment of law 3879/2010 ("Development of Lifelong Learning and other provisions"), a national holistic strategy on LLL was for the first time created in Greece and the National Network for Lifelong Learning was set up, consisting of all LLL governing bodies and LLL service providers.

Another education method named **People behind** which empowers 65+ is developing and gives access to healthy ageing methods. Three main projects can be retained, provided by the association:

- The **third age universities** initially crated in France in 1970, and then developed in other European countries, is now starting to appear in Greece in 2020. If we can say, thanks to covid-19 an e-learning platform was created giving access to a wider range of people, the platform is now available in the Greek language.
- The second project is called **Expression Lab 65+** and helps improve mental and physical health specifically maintaining memory.
- The last one is a 2-year project permitting seniors to be involved in performances, called, Grand voice. This project also provides social media learning.

Second Chance School is a public adult education school of 2 scholar years' duration. Acquiring a certificate equivalent to a secondary school diploma if the attendance was successful. The curriculum differs from the normal education, proposing a more flexible schedule and it follows an adapted teaching methodology and assessment of the learners. Second Chance Schools is a European framework fighting against social exclusion, aiming a positive attitude toward learning and acquiring basic knowledge and skills and facilitate also facilitating a possible integration into the labour market as the programme is open to everyone over 18 years old.

Open care centres for the elderly in Greece, with its number 300 centres and mainly situated in big cities, are the centres that contribute to keeping social contact for elderly people in Greece, and provide multiples services such as:

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→ Health education
→ Social and recreational facilities
→ Meal distribution
→ Physiotherapy
→ Occupational therapy
→ Social work services
→ Nursing services
→ Home help services
→ Voluntary services

Friendship Clubs, only being efficient in Athens are operating on a neighbourhood level offering services to senior citizens. It permits seniors to have a meeting place to exchange and share theirs on daily basis around recreational activities.

Different educational programmes for seniors are available in Greece even if they are not very developed nor extremely popular. Subjects provided by the trainings include the following.

For **Second Chance schools**:

- Greek Language
- Mathematics
- English Language
- Information Technology
- Social Education
- Environmental Education
- Physical Sciences
- Cultural - Aesthetic Education

For **People behind**:

- Life-long learning
- Intergenerational solidarity
- Digital education & inclusion
- Active participation in civil society

Their involvement in third age universities gives access to courses like:

- History

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- Greek philosophy
- Computers
- English language
- Ancient Tragedy
- Literature

Friendships clubs organise activities such as occupational therapy, physiotherapy, cultural venue visits, artistic endeavours, day trips and walking tours.

Poland

The share of older people in Polish society is systematically growing. At the end of 2019 people aged 60+ accounted for 25.3% of the total population. According to the forecast of the Polish Central Statistical Office, the number of people aged 60+ in Poland in 2030 will reach 10.8 million, and in 2050 will reach 13.7 million. These people will constitute about 40% of the total population of Poland. More than half (65.2%) of the elderly people live in cities. 58.1% of seniors are women.

People of senior age in Poland prefer activities carried out at home: watching TV, listening to the radio, reading the press. About 40% of seniors regularly read books and seniors more and more often use public libraries. In 2019, these libraries recorded 905.1 thousand readers over 60. In annual terms, their number increased by 5.9% and compared to 2015 - by 40.0%. More than half of senior citizens meet friends and family, usually in private homes. Among outdoor activities, seniors most often choose to go for walks and rest in the fresh air (e.g. on a garden plot). Elderly people also participate in various forms of cultural activities organized by culture centres, clubs, and community centres. In 2019, more than 210,000 people over 60 were members of various teams, clubs, and sections, and 54.7 thousand seniors were actively involved in art groups.

Organizations and institutions involved in seniors' education in Poland:

- Universities of the Third Age
- culture centres
- community centres
- libraries (municipal, communal, etc.)
- non-governmental organizations

One of the activities carried out by elderly people in their spare time is following courses at the Universities of the Third Age (U3A). The first one was established in Poland in the 1970s. Their mission

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is to activate seniors through educational activities and to develop students' interests, as well as to organize active leisure activities. In 2018, 640 U3A operated in Poland. In the academic year 2017/2018, a total of 113.2 thousand seniors were U3A students.

Clubs, culture, and community centres also offer to their members various activities, which in 2019 involved nearly 19.9 thousand elderly people. This means an increase in relation to the previous year by 7.5%. Most seniors (nearly 6.5 thousand) completed courses in digital literacy, which means 19.2% more than in the previous year. Foreign language courses were also popular.

For years, senior clubs run by the aforementioned institutions have been very popular among senior citizens, both in the countryside and in the city. Activities organized by rural housewives' clubs are also popular in the countryside.

Senior policy

In the period 2020-2021, the Government Programme for Social Activity of Elderly People was implemented in Poland. The Programme aimed to improve the quality and standard of living of elderly people for dignified ageing through social activity. One of the programme priorities was the education of elderly people. In 2020, 74 projects within this priority were approved and co-financed by the programme. Since 2021, the "Active +" multiannual programme (2021-2025) for the elderly has been implemented. Education of seniors is addressed within "activities aimed at increasing the participation of older people in active forms of spending free time" and in activities related to digital inclusion.

Since 2015, the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy has been implementing the "Senior+" Multiannual Programme addressed to local governments (previously the "Senior-WIGOR" Programme). The strategic goal of the Programme is to increase active participation in seniors' social life by supporting "Senior+" Day Homes and "Senior+" Clubs. The operational goal of the Programme is to provide support to seniors, inter alia, through activities for social activation, services in the field of physical activity, educational, cultural, and recreational offer.

Council for Senior Policy - an opinion-making and advisory body of the Minister of Family and Social Policy.

The document entitled "Social policy towards the elderly 2030. Security - Participation – Solidarity" was adopted by the Council of Ministers on October 26, 2018 (Resolution No. 161 of the Council of Ministers of October 26, 2018, on the adoption of the document Social policy towards the elderly 2030. SECURITY - PARTICIPATION - SOLIDARITY, MP from 2018, item 1169). The entity responsible for coordinating the activities indicated in the document is the Minister of Family, Labour and Social

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Policy. The implementation of social policy towards the elderly is monitored under the obligation resulting from the Act of 11 September 2015 on the elderly.

Current training / educational programmes and methodology of teaching seniors in Poland

Third Age Universities, senior clubs, cultural centres and other institutions offer seniors various forms of activity:

- lectures and seminars on various topics,
- regular classes (courses, workshops, interest clubs and others),
- sports and physical activities,
- language courses,
- art classes,
- computer classes,
- cultural and artistic events,
- trips, tours and tourist rallies,
- visits to cinemas, theatres, museums or other cultural institutions.

Use of computers and the Internet by seniors

In 2019, 34.1% of people aged 65–74 used computers in the last 3 months, i.e. by 2.4 percentage points. more than a year earlier. People of this age increasingly use computers on a regular basis (i.e. at least once a week). In 2019, 30.6% of people aged 65-74 regularly used a computer (an increase of 2.9% compared to the previous year). The Internet was used by 37.0% of people aged 65–74, and 33.3% of people of this age regularly used the Internet.

Elderly people most often used the Internet in private matters to read news, newspapers or magazines online (77.4% of people aged 65-74 who used the Internet in the last 3 months), to search for information about goods or services (67.8%), searching for information related to health (65.1%), sending and receiving e-mails (61.1%), and using internet banking services (41.1%). In 2019, 12.2% of people aged 65–74 used (in the last 12 months preceding the survey) public administration services provided via the Internet. Compared to the previous year, this percentage increased by 1.3 percentage points. In the analyzed age group, the most popular were filling out and sending forms (61.9% of people using administration services provided via the Internet) and searching for information on public administration websites (60.5%). In 2019, the number of people aged 65-74 who made purchases for private use online (in the last 12 months) increased. In the analyzed year, the share of these people was 13.2%, i.e. 2.8 percentage points higher than the year before. They most often ordered clothing and sports equipment (41.0% of seniors shopping online), as

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well as furniture, vehicles, household appliances, toys, and jewellery (33.7%).

Portugal

In Portugal, the first International University of the Third Age was founded in 1976, in Lisbon (Teixeira, 2017). However, it is after the 2000s that the Universities of the Third Age gain vitality and geographic dispersion, appearing in the country with different nomenclatures, such as Universities of Maturity and Academies of Culture and Cooperation, most of them being called Seniors Universities (the US in the Portuguese acronym and SU in English acronym). The 2015 data reveals the reach of SU in the interior of the country, including small towns (Table 1).

Table 1 -Location of Portugal's Senior Universities by District, 2015.

Districts	**SU (N)**
Santarém, Coimbra, Leiria e Castelo Branco	39
Lisboa	32
Beja, Évora, Setúbal e Portalegre	26
Aveiro, Viseu e Guarda	24
Porto	17
Viana do Castelo, Braga, Vila Real e Bragança	16
Faro, Ilhas e Estrangeiro	15

Source: RUTIS, 2016.

A large part of SU are not linked to formal educational institutions and are close to the self-help movement in education for the elderly (Páscoa & Gil, 2019). Thus, SU are created by non-governmental organizations and the third sector, which promote non-formal and informal education for adults and seniors. The entities perform innovative learning practices aligned with the cultural and social context in which they are inserted and configure themselves as transforming agents for social change of seniors facing community problems (Ricardo, 2016).

The SU in the Portuguese context are considered to be spaces that stimulate socializing, creativity, and learning for seniors (Páscoa & Gil, 2019). They operate during working hours, during

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the week, following the school calendar (they open in September/October, close at Christmas, Carnival, and Easter, and close in June/July), with varied disciplines of arts activities, computer science, sports, social sciences and humanities, citizenship and among others. Most subjects are common to all universities, with the number varying depending on levels of depth, availability of volunteer educators, and types of materials available (RUTIS, 2016).

The coordination of courses and free courses in SU are organized by volunteer members, maintained by the non-governmental organizations in partnership with other public and private institutions, such as city councils, regional and local entities, associations, foundations, universities, research centres, private social solidarity institutions (*IPSS*), and companies - as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 - Type of bond of the Senior Universities in Portugal in the years 2002 to 2012.

Type of Bond	**2002 (n=51)**	**2005 (n=66)**	**2008 (n=102)**	**2011 (n=172)**	**2012 (n=189)**
SU associated with another institution	70%	75%	80%	90%	93%
Autonomous SU	30%	25%	20%	10%	7%

Source: RUTIS, 2016.

Such partnerships help with administrative maintenance, content for dissemination and expansion of the workshops, as well as recognition of the educational actions promoted by SUs. Although most are integrated into a structure, it does not mean that seniors do not actively participate in the management and organization of activities (RUTIS, 2016).

In addition to the disciplines, SU develops several parallel activities, such as cultural outings, editing magazines, books, and regular publications. Therefore, the educational spaces foster a new social perspective for older people, who are now seen by society as 'subjects of action', beyond the welfare approaches (Pocinho, Lacerda, & Santos, 2015. p.5).

In 2005, the Association Network of Universities of the Third Age (RUTIS) was officially created to promote, unite and represent senior universities. The creation of this network is for the existing universities a focus of agglutination and technical support, as well as providing a series of activities for their students. The most important function at that time was to go to potential promoters (associations, municipalities, and informal groups of seniors) who wanted to create new senior universities and provide them with the technical and motivational support they needed for that purpose.

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According to RUTIS, 249 Academies and Senior Universities served more than 35,000 Portuguese students aged 50 and over in 2015, with the offer of 4,300 subjects taught mainly by volunteer teachers (92%) (RUTIS, 2016). Recent data signal the total of 368 SU enrolled in RUTIS with, approximately, 61,000 students enrolled and more than 7,200 volunteer teachers (Jacob, 2020).

The increase in the number of participants observed in these educational programmes accompanies the demographic transition. It is noteworthy that in the countries of the European Union, people aged 65 and over in 2018 represented one-fifth of the total population (19.7%), with 101.1 million elderly people. Demographic projections indicate that the elderly will represent 28.5% in 2050, reaching 149.2 million people in the European Union. In Portugal, 3,738,808 people are aged 55 or over, equivalent to 36.3% of the total population of 10,298,252 inhabitants (08 October 2021, PORDATA). Statistical projections signal that this population group will total 47.1% of the total Portuguese population (Eurostat, 2019).

The political support to the activities developed in the SU occurred in 2016, with the publication of the Council of Ministers Resolution No. 76/2016 (Diário da República, 29 November, 1st series, No. 229). By this Resolution, US's are recognized as environments that directly impact on the improvement of the quality of life, well-being and social insertion of people aged 50 years and over, both from an individual and collective point of view, as "the stimuli to the capacity of learning and participation can contribute to society distancing itself from some stereotypes and negative images attributed to ageing and old age" (Council of Ministers Resolution no 76, 2016). In its text, this Resolution states:

> 1 — Recognise the importance of the academies known as "senior universities" as socio-educational responses aimed at creating and regularly promoting activities in the social, cultural, knowledge, and social areas for people aged 50 and over, run by the public or private entities, whether profit-making or not.
>
> 2 — To determine that in the pursuit of that objective, the member of the Government responsible for the area of solidarity and social security recognizes and supports the development of activities of the senior universities that aim to: a) Create opportunities that provide for active and healthy ageing; b) Provide regular social, social, knowledge, sports, cultural, leisure and scientific activities; c) Encourage lifelong learning and stimulate the exchange of knowledge; d) Promote social inclusion, civic participation, and cooperation; e) Prevent isolation, developing social participation.
>
> 3 — To support senior universities that provide their users with the following services: a)

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Theoretical and practical initiatives in various areas of knowledge and expertise; b) Seminars and multidisciplinary courses; c) Cultural outings and trips; d) Recreational and artistic groups;

e) Dissemination and information services for seniors; f) Socio-cultural activities in accordance with the users' interests.

4 — Determining that the Association Network of Universities of the Third Age is the entity that frames the senior universities and is a partner for the development of active ageing and social economy policies.

5 — Establishing that the approval of the regulatory norms is made by normative dispatch of the member of the Government responsible for the area of solidarity and social security Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

Gradually, an increase in the development of online activities by Portuguese SU has been observed, mainly, during the Covid-19 pandemic period. According to the data released by RUTIS (2021a), from the total of 127 Senior Universities investigated, 72% of them developed some kind of online activity. However, senior student participation was around 20% to 30%. This low percentage of senior involvement with virtual learning activities can be explained by the difficulty of students to access digital media and the Internet network, as well as by unfamiliarity or lack of interest in handling digital equipment (RUTIS, 2021b).

Easter and Gil (2017) report that the difficulty in using digital resources causes digital exclusion, even if the elderly population already has contact with different digital tools. The authors point out that the current technological challenges "presuppose a permanent and coordinated action of the education systems, ensuring lifelong learning actions" (p.35), and that the Senior Universities in Portugal have played a positive role in this training over the years, in the face-to-face modality.

Research developed by Barros et al (2020) pointed out that the main motivations of 67 seniors in attending digital technology courses are related to image and video applications (48%), with the most referenced being Google Photos; social networks (46%), with emphasis on the preference for WhatsApp and Facebook; and applications for the creation of content (33%), especially Word. The authors indicate that the fluency and immersion of seniors regarding the type of technological resource adopted must be considered when evaluating the use of technologies by this audience, going beyond the factor related to age.

Portuguese policies reinforce the need for greater investment in the digital skills of the population. The government proposal of "National Initiative in Digital Skills in 2030, Portugal INCoDe.2030" seeks to mobilize efforts of the government and civil society in a joint action of (re) qualification of the human potential, to respond to the training demands of modern society. According

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to Páscoa and Gil (2017), in the scope of this policy, digital competence is understood as the ability to access digital media and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to understand and critically evaluate digitally available content.

2.2 Stakeholders

The educational proposals for seniors take place mostly in Universities of the Third Age, which develop a series of activities that seek to respond to the expectations and educational needs of seniors in the process of lifelong learning. However, there are also other initiatives, from other entities that can serve as inspiration.

Examples of initiatives in teaching seniors				
Cyprus				
Name of an expert / institution dealing with seniors' education	**Contact data (a website address / contact person)**	**Offering (what can they deliver – trainings? Articles? Applications? Etc.)**	**Target group(s) – on whom do they focus?**	**Other comments / additional information**
Adult Education Centres provided by the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth	Kimonos and Thoukididou, Acropoli, 1434, Nicosia, Cyprus	Through the Adult Education Centre, the MOEC offers lifelong learning opportunities to adults. The courses are free of charge for many target groups, including the elderly.	Adults, with the main focus on seniors.	Initially, the Adult Education Centres were established in rural areas (1952). In 1960, following the independence of the Republic of Cyprus, 175 centres functioned with 3750 members. Since 1974, they have expanded in most urban areas and today they function in all areas of the Republic of Cyprus.

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Nicosia Municipality Multifunctional Foundation	Eptanisou 11, 1016 Nicosia, P.O BOX 21015, 1500 Nicosia	Any services to people over 65 years old. The majority of them are characterized as hobby and leisure activities as they are offering music, art and craft lessons, yoga classes, agua aerobic, cooking etc. Moreover, it provides medical support (hearing and ophthalmologic exams) as well as excursions and mental support (daily communication with social workers for emotional empowerment and guidance).	Seniors	Many other municipalities offer the same type of help, education, and activities to seniors.
Cultural services by the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth	Kimonos and Thoukididou, Acropoli, 1434, Nicosia, Cyprus	Seniors can benefit from Programs and Grants Schemes for a wide range of subjects, including literary and artistic activities and theatrical creation.	Adults, including seniors	
Cyprus Third Age Observatory	15 Alexandrou Papadiamanti 3085 Limassol, Cyprus	The Observatory aims to offer to seniors a society without limitations, a healthy lifestyle through exercise and wellbeing, lifelong learning opportunities, and active participation.	Seniors	

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Open University of Cyprus	Giannou Kranidioti 33, Latsia 2220	It allows seniors for Higher Education programmes.	Adults, including seniors.	
The Cyprus Third Age Association	https://c3a-cyprus.org/ S	It aims to advance the education of the public and in particular the education of older people and the provision of facilities for leisure time and recreational activities.	Seniors	
Czech Republic				
Name of an expert / institution dealing with seniors' education	**Contact data (a website address / contact person)**	**Offering (what can they deliver – trainings? Articles? Applications? Etc.)**	**Target group(s) – on whom do they focus?**	**Other comments / additional information**
Janáčkova akademie múzických umění	https://hf.jamu.cz/verejnost/univerzita-tretiho-veku-czv	Lecture series (especially music and theatre history and personalities), thematic excursions	Seniors aged 60+, mostly with secondary and higher education	
Slezská univerzita v Opavě	https://czv.slu.cz/oblast/4?do=changeKategorie	Lecture series in the social sciences (art, history, literature), memory training courses, language courses, IT skills courses	For seniors aged 60+, educational attainment is not a determinant	
Technická univerzita v Liberci	https://cdv.tul.cz/univerzita-tretiho-veku	Lecture series in social and natural sciences, thematic excursions, language courses, computer courses, art courses, movement courses, the possibility of participation in a choir	Seniors aged 50+, at least secondary education is a prerequisite	
Spravedlivý mezi seniory, community centre	https://www.mezi-seniory.cz	The organisation of trips, educational courses, lectures and talks with interesting personalities, creative activities and physical activities	Seniors aged 60+	
ELPIDA o.p.s.	https://www.elpida.cz	Running an educational and cultural centre for the elderly with a wide range of language, computer, craft and movement courses	General senior citizens	
ŽIVOT 90, civic association	https://www.zivot90.cz	Publishing the Vital magazine	General senior citizens	

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Rada seniorů České republiky	http://www.rscr.cz		General senior citizens	
Greece				
Name of an expert / institution dealing with seniors' education	**Contact data (a website address / contact person)**	**Offering (what can they deliver – trainings? Articles? Applications? Etc.)**	**Target group(s) – on whom do they focus?**	**Other comments / additional information**
Age Platform	https://www.age-platform.eu/	Selections of good practices, age involvement in EU projects, age campaigns, age rights	Seniors	
Lifelong learning	https://www.inedivim.gr/en/tags/lifelong-learning	implement programmes of training and general education	Adult and Seniors	
People behind	https://www.peoplebehind.gr/what-we-do	active and healthy ageing	+65 seniors	
Expression Lab +65	https://www.peoplebehind.gr/what-we-do	Theatre, music and theatrical movement, practising creativity, imagination and expression	+65 seniors	
Poland				
Name of an expert / institution dealing with seniors' education	**Contact data (a website address / contact person)**	**Offering (what can they deliver – trainings? Articles? Applications? Etc.)**	**Target group(s) – on whom do they focus?**	**Other comments / additional information**
Krakowska Akademia im. Andrzeja Frycza Modrzewskiego filia w Tychach	https://www.ka.edu.pl/tychy/uniwersytet-trzeciego-wieku/aktualnosci-utw/ / tel: 32/326-51-01. E-mail: utwtychy@afm.edu.pl	courses in tourism, computer skills, drawing, handicraft, decoupage, languages, literature, music, nordic walking and others	Seniors	Recently the most popular of about seven hundred Polish Universities of the Third Age. It has about 1.5 thousand students
Uniwersytet Otwarty Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego	https://www.uo.uw.edu.pl/ / e-mail: biuro@uo.uw.edu.pl, tel. 22 55 24 040, 22 55 20 724, Patrycja Gozdowska-Tomaszkiewicz (biuro@uo.uw.edu.pl)	Open lectures, educational and cultural activities, debates, open-air concerts	people of all age, mostly seniors	The open university organized by the largest university in Warsaw

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Fundacja AgeHUB	https://agehub.pl/ / tel. 534-701-114, kontakt@agehub.pl	Computer courses, manual book, individual consultations	Seniors	The foundation was established to conduct digital education of people aged 60+.
Cyfrowy Senior	https://seniorcyfrowy.pl/ Stowarzyszenie Europartner AKIE (tel.: 570 747 170, e-mail: cyfrowy.senior2018@gmail.com), Łomżyńska Rada Federacji Stowarzyszeń Naukowo-Technicznych NOT w Łomży (tel: +86 215 05 96, biuro@notlomza.pl)	Digital literacy and soft skills courses, psychological support	Seniors	Digital education project for seniors co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, implemented by two institutions (see: Contact data).
CAM Nowolipie	https://cam.waw.pl/ / tel. 22 838 34 96	lectures, digital and language courses, a monthly magazine for seniors, career office for seniors, trips, concerts, painting, sculpture and handicraft exhibitions, general fitness and anti-idiopathic gymnastics, yoga, individual consultations with a physiotherapist etc.	Senior and integrational groups	Operates in Warsaw
Stowarzyszenie Pomocy Potrzebującym "Nadzieja"	http://mas.spp-nadzieja.pl/ / tel. 694 409 087, spp-nadzieja@wp.pl	Stationary and virtual courses, workshops, video magazine, health prophylaxis, support for senior councils	Seniors	Operates near Warsaw
Fundacja Partycypacji Społecznej	https://fundacja-spoleczna.pl / tel. +48 61 662 11 60, kontakt@fundacja-spoleczna.pl	Digital literacy courses and social animation	People at risk of exclusion	Realizes projects in four voivodeships (Lower and Upper Silesia, Greater Poland, Pomerania)
Fundacja im. Lesława A. Pagi		Online courses and workshops, books, online educational game	Students, people at risk of exclusion	Courses for seniors in new technologies, personal finance and health prophylaxis
Stowarzyszenie	https://kreatywni50plu	Digital literacy courses,	Seniors 50+	

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Kreatywni 50 Plus	s.wixsite.com/ / kreatywni50plus@gmail.com, kreatywni.kursy@gmail.com, tel. 693 258 256	free online educational materials, Senior Digital Support Centers		
Ogólnopolska Federacja Stowarzyszeń Uniwersytetów Trzeciego Wieku	https://www.federacjautw.pl/ / tel. 696 95 20 16, e-mail: federacjautw@interia.eu	Educational activities carried out by over 50 Universities of the Third Age	Seniors	Big Association of Universities of the Third Age from all over Poland
Portugal				
Name of an expert / institution dealing with seniors' education	**Contact data (a website address / contact person)**	**Offering (what can they deliver – trainings? Articles? Applications? Etc.)**	**Target group(s) – on whom do they focus?**	**Other comments / additional information**
Virtual Senior University (2.0) Universidade Sénior Virtual (2.0) / RUTIS	https://www.seniorvirtual.pt/	A platform for free courses: Language courses, IT skills courses, Dance, Lecture series in the social sciences (art, history, literature) and mental health	Seniors aged 50+ (Portuguese and Brazilians)	Project developed in partnership with the Open University for the Elderly program from the Pontifical Catholic University of Goiás (PUC-Brazil).
Projeto En-RED-Versados Clube de Poesia on-line	https://enredversados.wordpress.com	A blog to promote the Portuguese language and poetry, as well as develop ICT skills. The 60+ students share poems and author biographies, video and audio records	Seniors aged 60+ (Portuguese and Spanish)	Project developed by the Senior University of the University of A Coruña (Spain) in partnership with the 60+ Program of the Polytechnic of Leiria (Portugal)

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Senior University of Santarém Universidade Sénior de Santarém (UTIS)	https://utisantarem20.wixsite.com/utis/utis-tv	Virtual Photography Exhibition (2021 - 9th Competition, theme: Gardens of Santarém)	General senior citizens	

Contemporary Senior University of Porto Universidade Sénior Contemporânea (USC) do Porto	https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL5940DDFE6E19CED4	Online Television Channel of the Contemporary Senior University (programs and video classes organized by USC students)	General senior citizens	USC Web TV, first online TV channel to appear in Portugal within the scope of the SU
National Tile Museum Museu Nacional do Azulejo	https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/national-azulejo-museum	Online exhibition about the identity art of the tile	General senior citizens	Linked to the project: 'Portugal: Art and Heritage', with virtual access through Google Arts & Culture
Virtual tour of the Tower of Belém Visita virtual à Torre de Belém	https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/tower-of-bel%C3%A9m	Virtual tour of the country's cultural reference architectural ensemble - a monument classified by UNESCO as "Cultural Heritage for All Mankind" in 1983.	General senior citizens	Monument classified by UNESCO as "Cultural Heritage of All Mankind" in 1983. Virtual tour accessed by Google Arts & Culture

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Atlantic Digital Art Project Projecto Atlântico de Arte Digital (PAAD)	https://www.iac-azores.org/projectos/paad.html	Creation of a network of cooperation and exchange between the distinct regions that form Macaronesia, based on the circulation of its artists who dedicate themselves to creation using the new communication technologies.	General senior citizens	Transnational initiative promoted by six Macaronesian institutions
The Landscape Museum O Museu da Paisagem	https://museudapaisagem.pt/	A digitally based museum dedicated to the landscape that has as its mission to contribute to the formation of landscape citizenship, seeking to awaken the critical and participatory sense of all citizens	General senior citizens	Created in 2019, the Landscape Museum is constituted as a non-profit scientific and cultural association, with headquarters at the School of Social Communication of the Polytechnic of Lisbon
Digital Room - House of Music Blog Sala Digital - Blog Casa da Música	https://blog.casadamusica.com/category/concertos/	Online streaming of musical concerts promoted by Casa da Música	General senior citizens	

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"Staying at home in our company" - National Ballet Company “Ficar em casa na nossa companhia” - Companhia Nacional de Bailado (CNB)	https://www.cnb.pt/41-2/ficar-em-casa-na-nossa-companhia/	CNB's project that brings together a set of online initiatives through the use of digital tools. Access makes it possible to follow the artists' day-to-day activities, develop knowledge about dance and creativity, and watch shows online.	General senior citizens	

2.3 Conclusion

The desk research proves that Universities of the Third Age (U3A) play a dominant role in the education of senior citizens in partners' countries. They have different forms, most of them operate in partnership with other institutions (mainly universities), public or private. Other organisations providing education for the elderly are not mapped in any way and we learn about their activities only occasionally. These organisations are: senior clubs, culture centres, libraries, charities, other primary and secondary schools, private colleges, etc. They organise various educational programmes and activities for seniors. It should be stressed, that culture and arts are not a high priority in seniors’ education and they are not included in many formal trainings, it is teached mainly through informal training in the form of activities.

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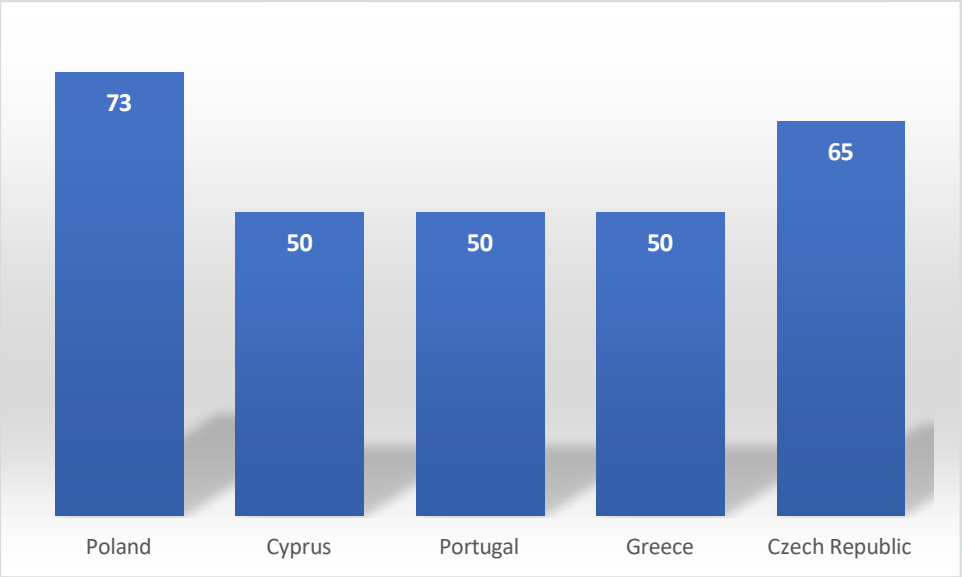
3.Online survey results

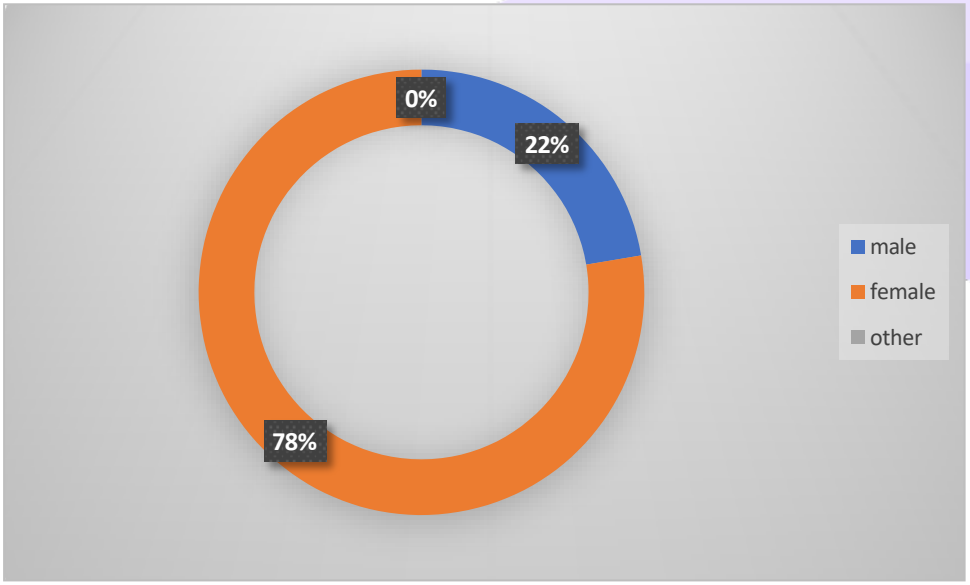
3.1. Survey among senior citizens

1. Number of respondents



The most numerous were respondents from Poland and the Czech Republic, who together make up almost 48% of the 288 participants in the survey.

2. Gender



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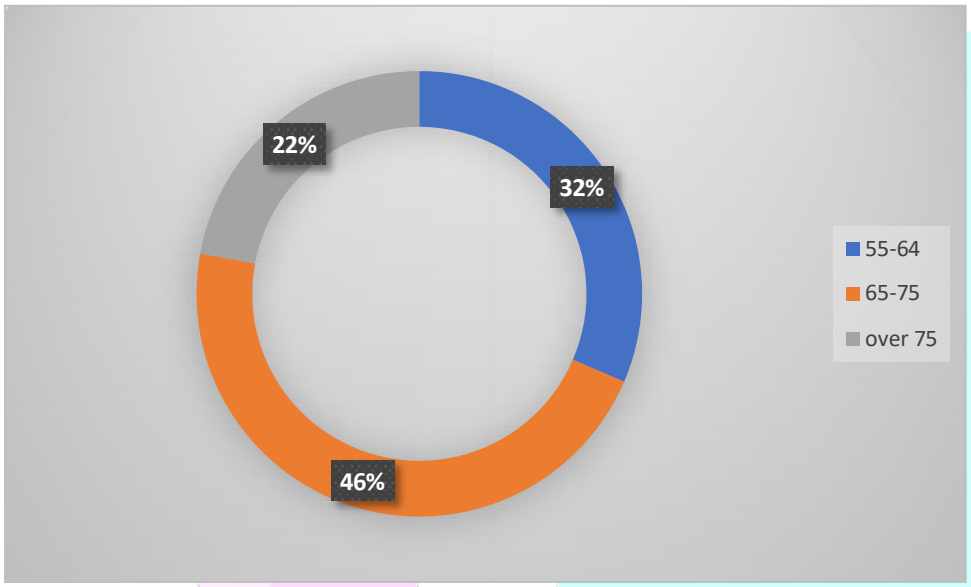
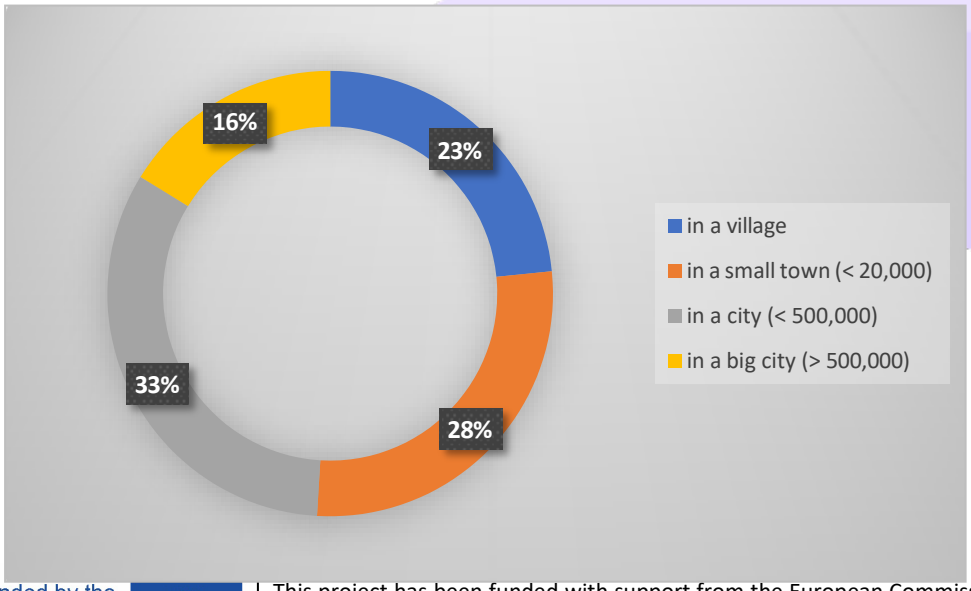
In all countries where the survey was conducted, women constituted the vast majority. In the Czech Republic, women made up 88%. Only in Cyprus did men accounted for more than a third of the respondents.

3. Age



The age structure of respondents from different countries was different. The oldest group of respondents were residents of Portugal and the Czech Republic – in both countries only one person was in the group under 65. On the other hand, in Greece people from this age group accounted for more than half of the respondents.

4. I live:



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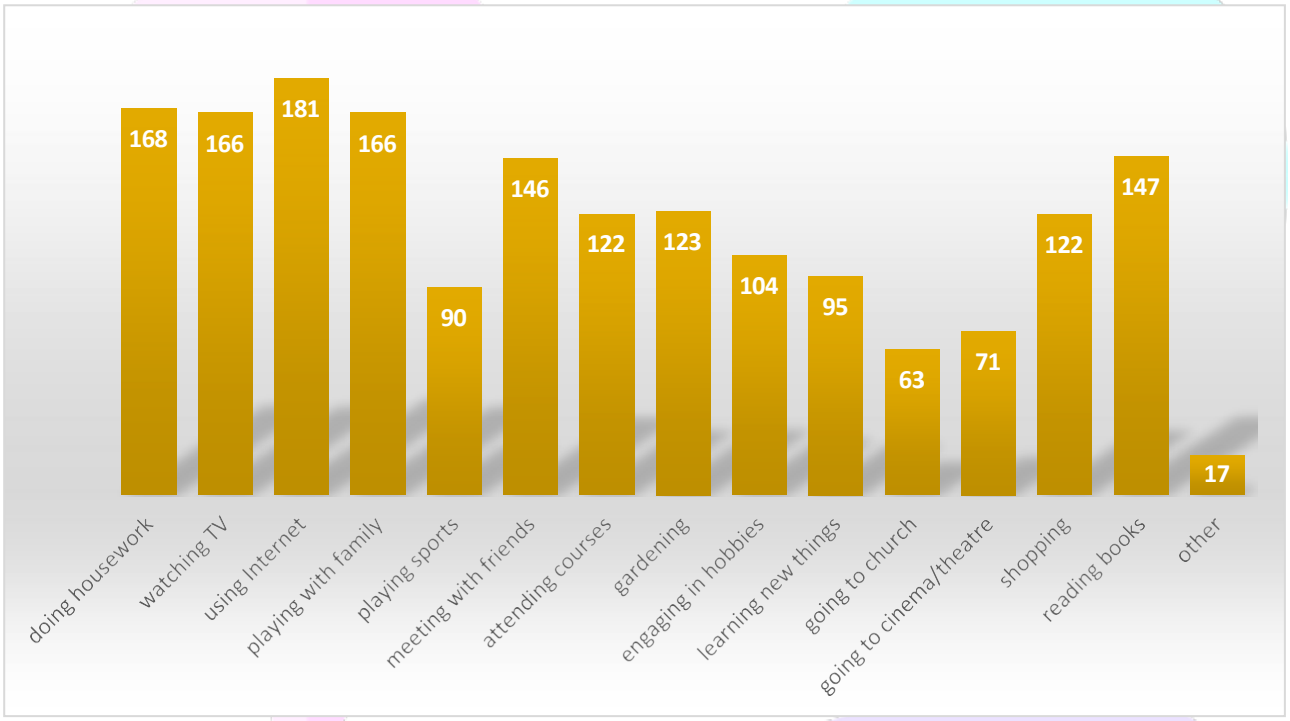
Large differences between individual countries also applied to the place of residence. In Poland, the most numerous were rural residents, in Portugal (where only 27 people answered this question) – residents of small towns, in the Czech Republic and Cyprus – residents of cities below 500,000 and in Greece – people living in cities with more than 500,000.

5. How do you usually spend your free time?



The way seniors spend their free time is very diverse. Seniors take care of their homes, flats, or gardens, they spend time with family, meet friends, read, do hobbies, go to the theatre.

Nearly two-thirds of the respondents use the Internet daily and over 40% attend educational events. One third learn new things whether or not it is education.

The study shows that the favourite activities of seniors in Poland are surfing the Internet and reading books, in Cyprus – watching TV and spending time with family, in Portugal – shopping and watching TV, in Greece – doing housework, using the Internet and meeting friends and in the Czech Republic – using the Internet, attending courses and doing housework. However, the study showed no great differences between given countries.

6. The Covid-19 situation has changed the way you spend your free time?

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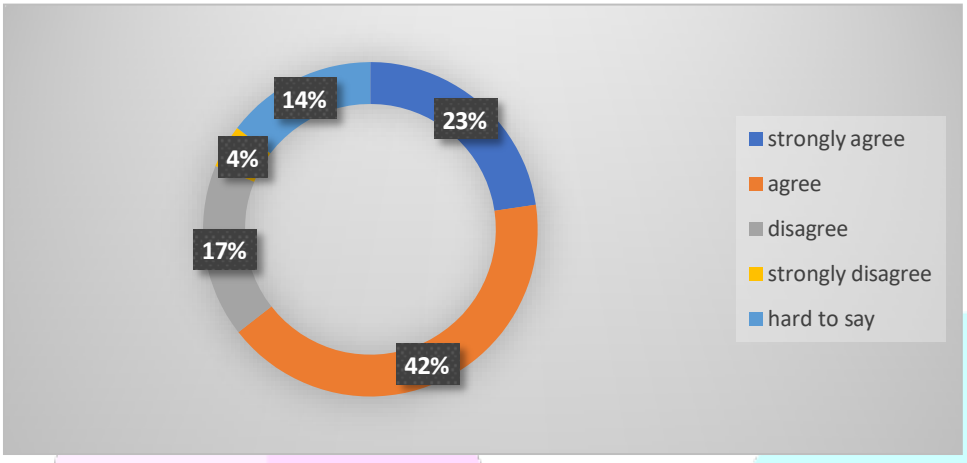
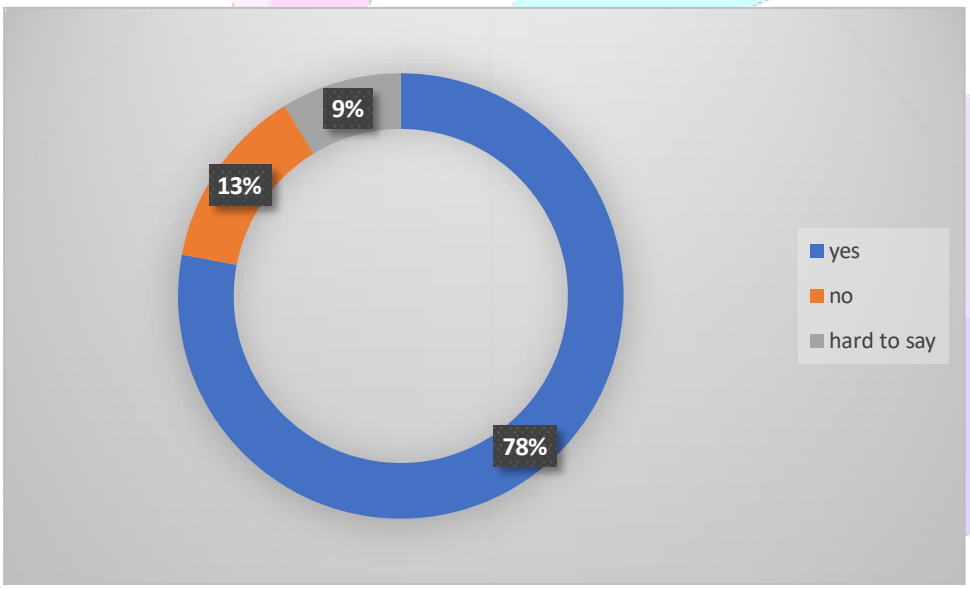


COVID-19 affected free time approximately 65% of seniors. 14% of seniors were unable to assess the change. Seniors from Portugal and Cyprus were hit hardest by the changes resulting from the pandemic. In both, these countries over 90% of respondents agreed that COVID-19 has changed the way they spend their free time. In Poland, more than one-third of respondents replied that the pandemic did not affect their lives. It is worth remembering that the largest group of respondents from Poland were inhabitants of rural areas.

7. Have you ever participated in activities/classes dedicated especially for seniors?



78% of the total number of respondents took part in activities for seniors. Respondents from the Czech Republic constitute a special group, where approx. 97% of the respondents admitted participating in such classes. In Cyprus, more than a third could not answer this question, and in

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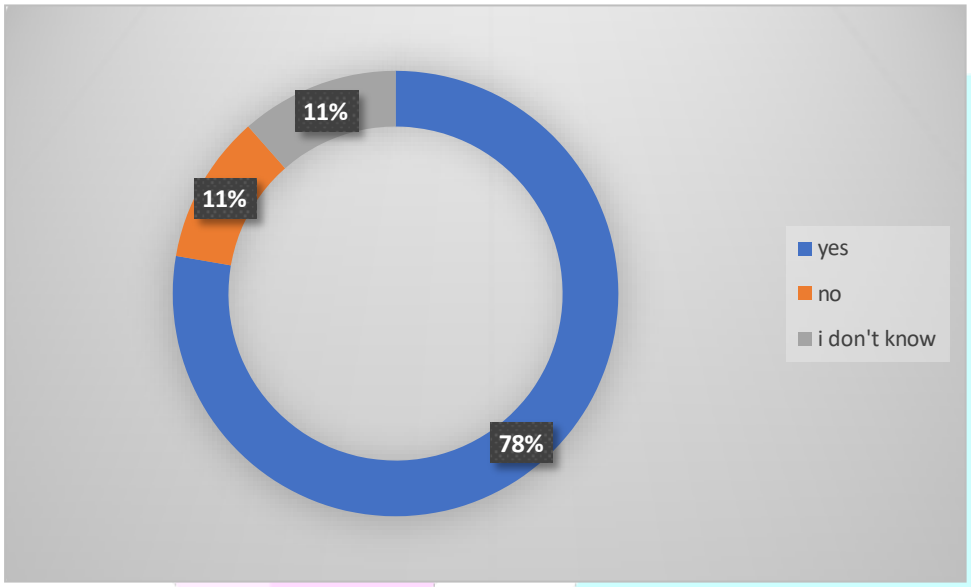
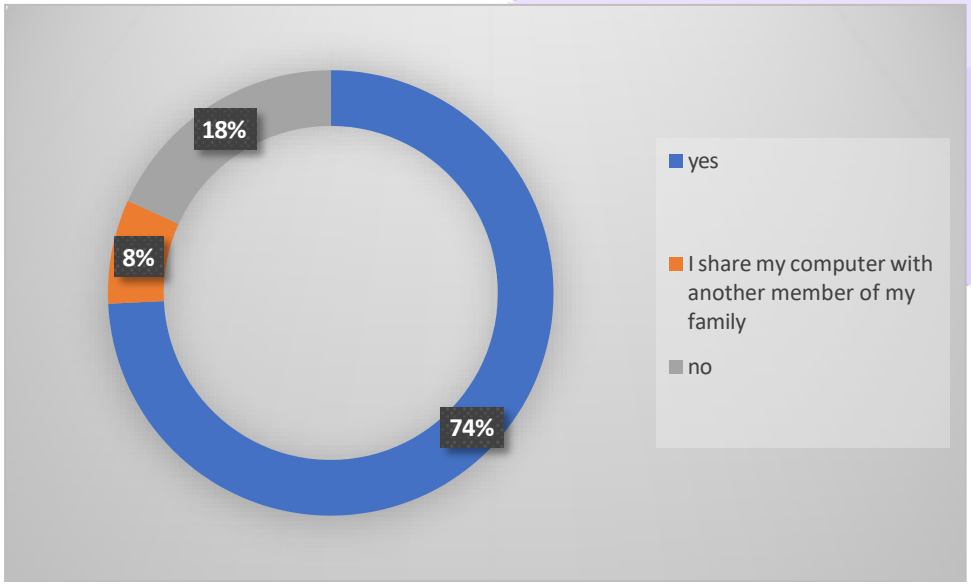
Greece, more than half answered “no”.

8. Do you have the possibility to take part in classes dedicated especially for seniors in the place you live in?



Answers to this question more or less coincide with the previous one both at the national and international level, which indicates that non-participation depends very little on the choice made by seniors and very much on the possibilities in their place of residence. In the Czech Republic, all respondents confirmed that they have the opportunity to participate in classes.

9. Do you have a PC or laptop on your own?



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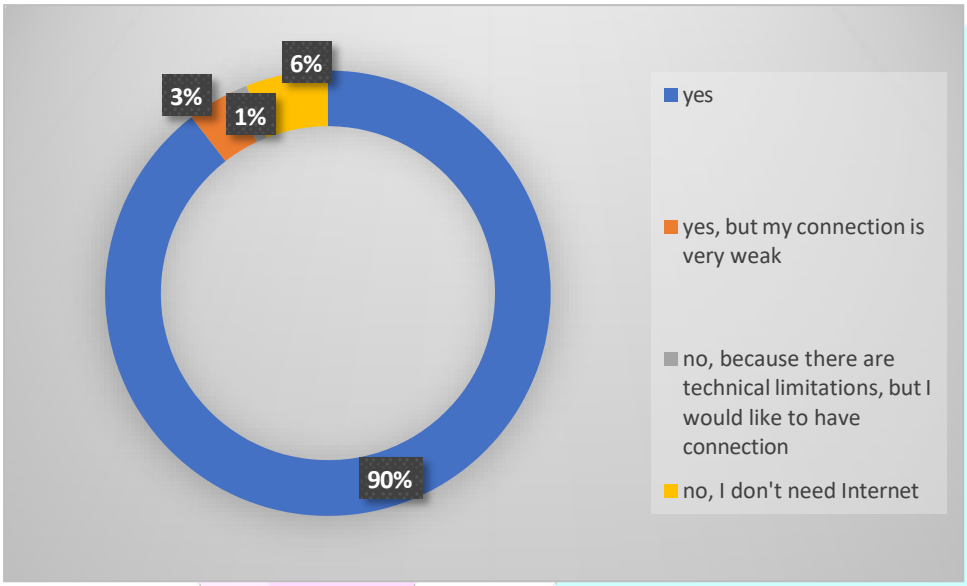
82% of respondents either own a computer or share it with somebody. The situation is the worst in Portugal, where more than half of the respondents do not have access to a computer. However, it should be noted that this is one of the two oldest study groups and the most homogenous.

10. Do you have access to the Internet in your living place?



93% of respondents have access to the Internet, 90% do not complain about the quality of the connection. The comparison of these results with the results of question no. 5 shows that about 70% of seniors with good-quality Internet access spend their free time surfing it.

The best Internet access is in the Czech Republic and Greece, where all survey participants answered yes. On the other extreme is again Portugal, where more than one in five said they do not need the Internet. A similar answer was given by 12% of respondents from Cyprus.

11. How good are you at: Evaluate your level of competence from 1 to 5, where 1 = can't do it, 5 = very good?

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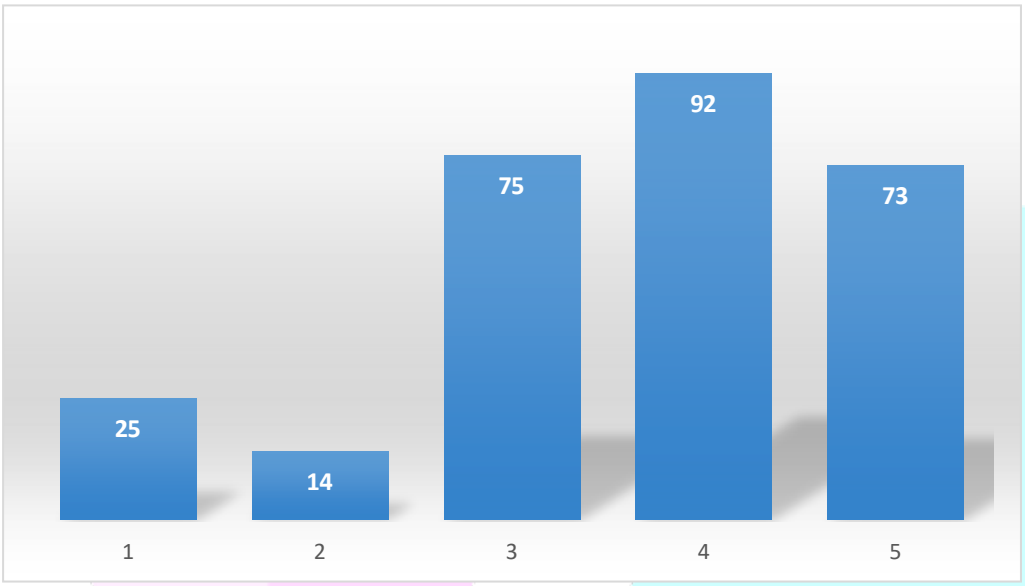
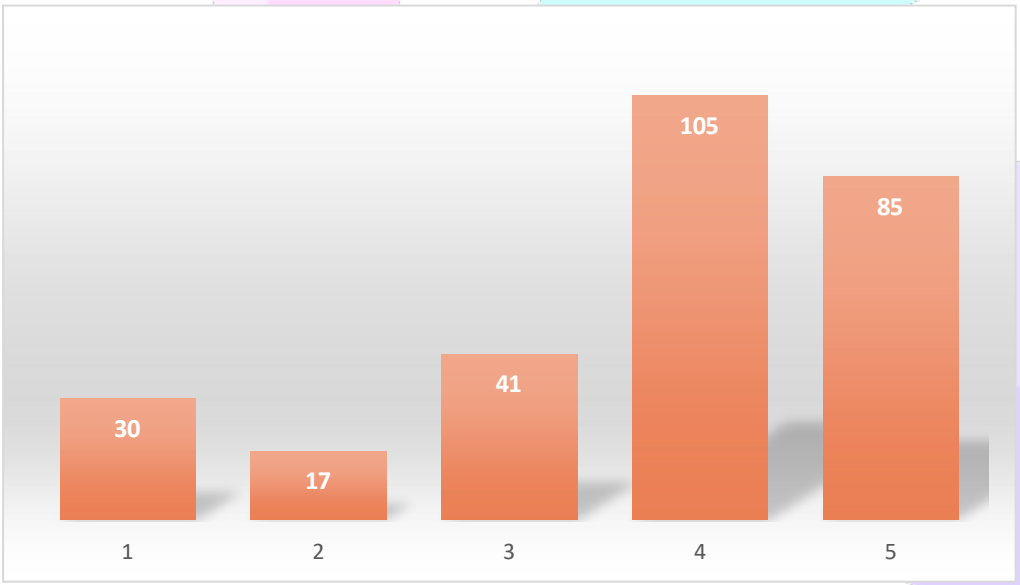
- **Surfing the Internet (average: 3.62)**



- **Using apps to communicate with friends (average: 3.71)**



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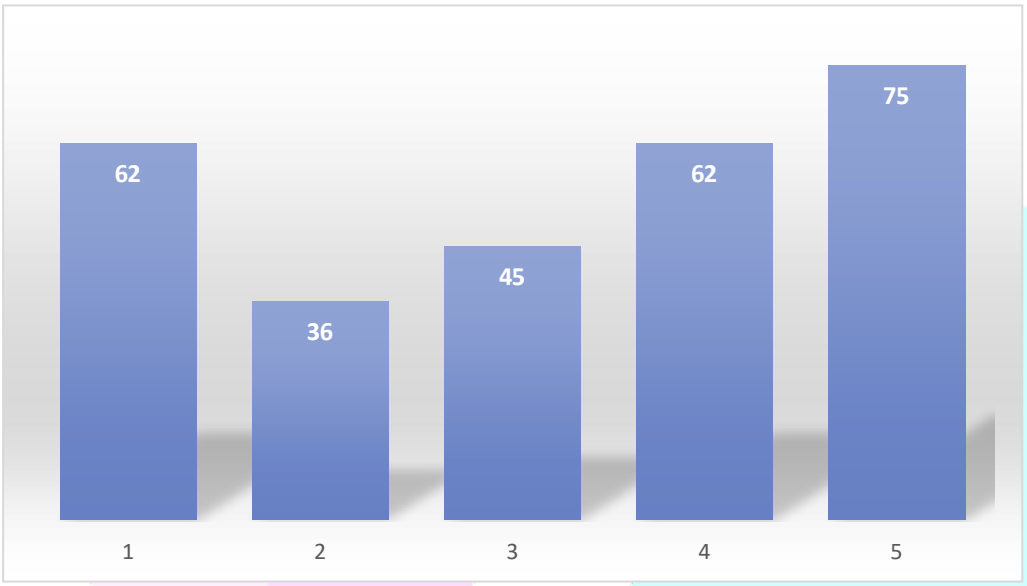
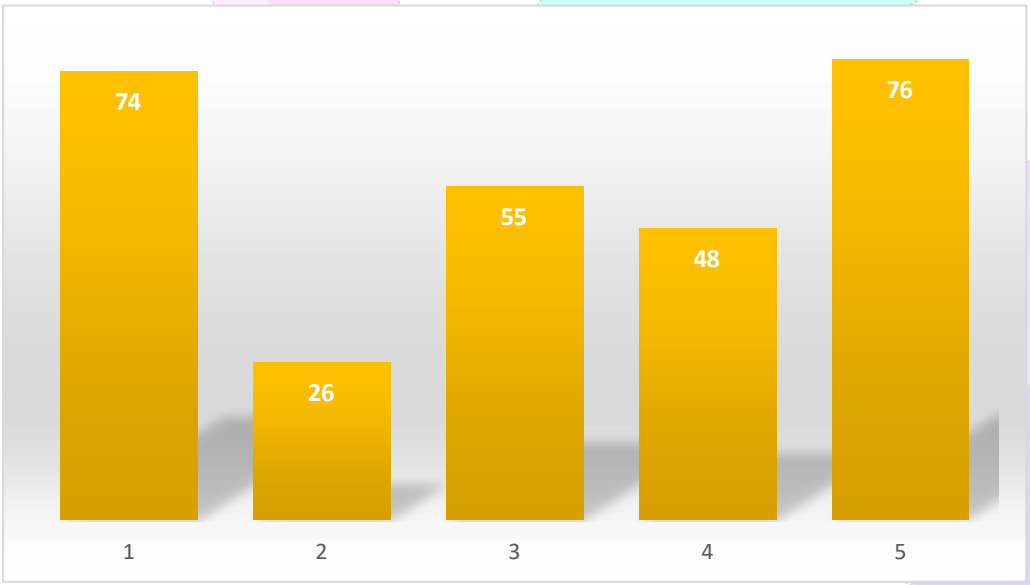
- **Facebook – posting, sending pictures, sharing posts (average: 3.19)**



- **Doing online shopping and paying online (average: 3.09)**



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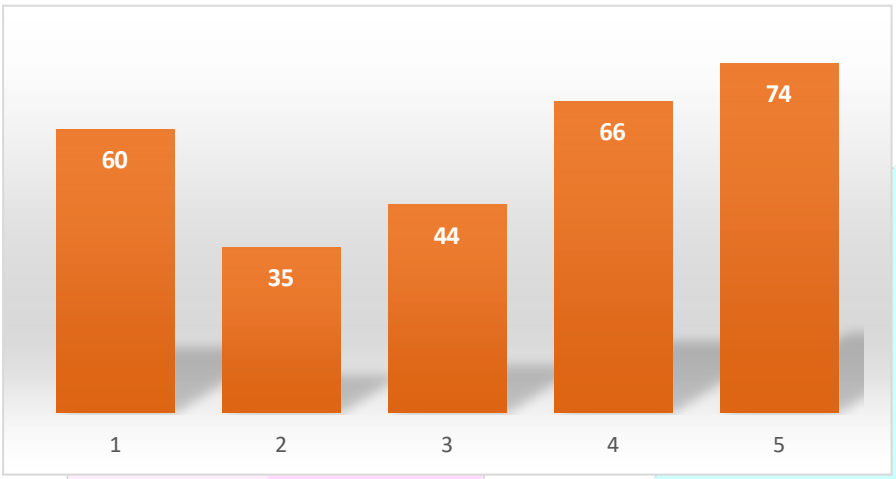
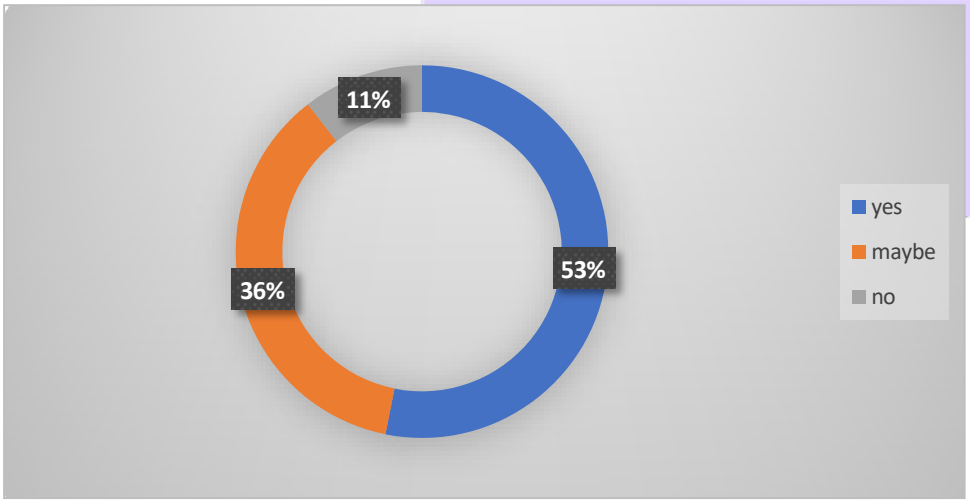
- **Taking care of official matters using the internet – taxes, health issues sending applications, sending emails etc. (average: 3.21)**



Generally, the group of respondents declares a medium level of digital skills in terms of surfing the Web and communication apps. It is more difficult for seniors to make online payments and handle formal matters online.

The Czechs rate their skills highest in three categories. The exceptions are communication applications, more popular among seniors in Greece, and Facebook, which is best mastered by seniors from Poland.

12. Would you be interested in a training course on digital arts and creativity i.e. would you like to discover arts available on the internet and learn how to create your own art with internet tools?



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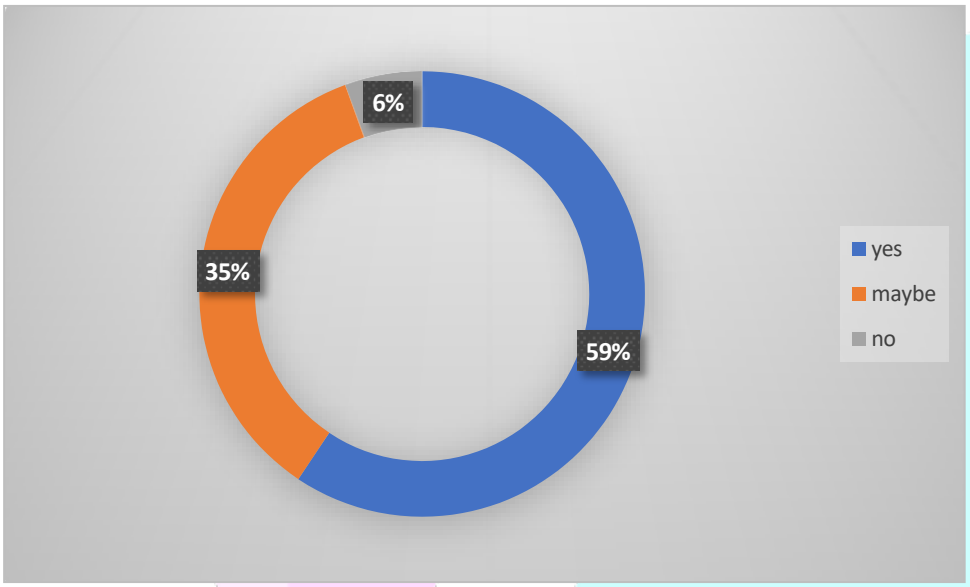
As many as 89% of seniors do not rule out the possibility, that they will attend a training course in "digital art". Seniors from Portugal and the Czech Republic showed the least interest.

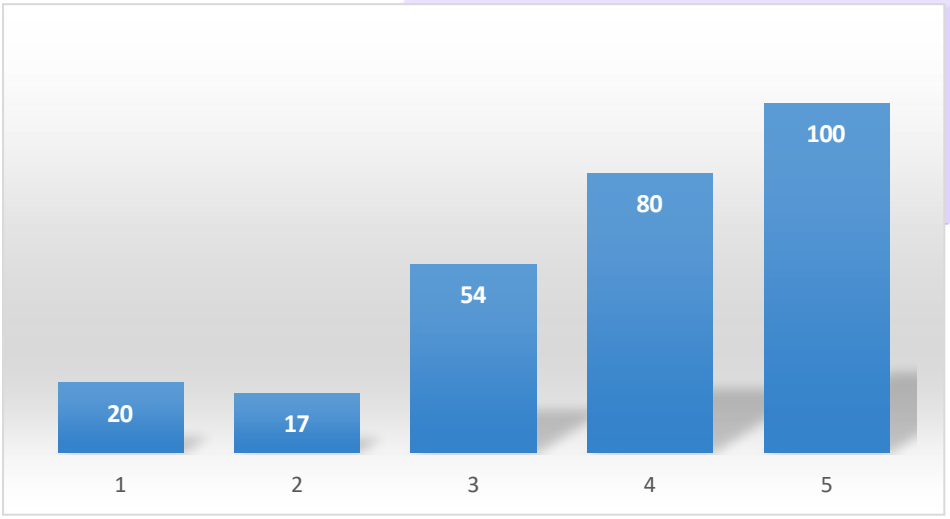
13. Do you think online tools could help you to develop your creativity?



Most seniors find online tools useful in acquiring and improving their "digital" skills.

14. Which kind of topic would you like to deepen during the training course? Evaluate from 1 to 5, where 1 = not at all 5 = very much

- **Computing (average: 3.82)**



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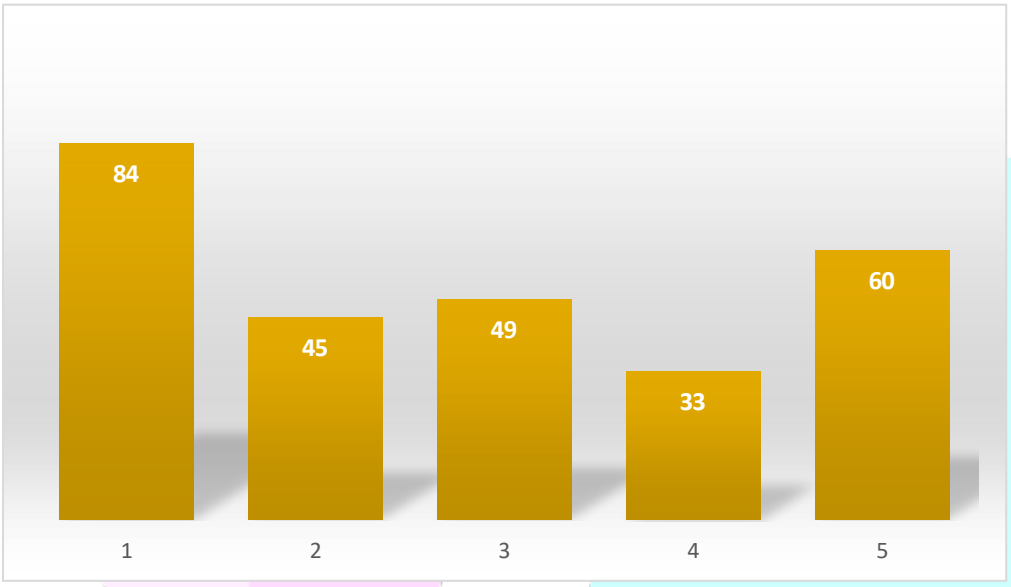
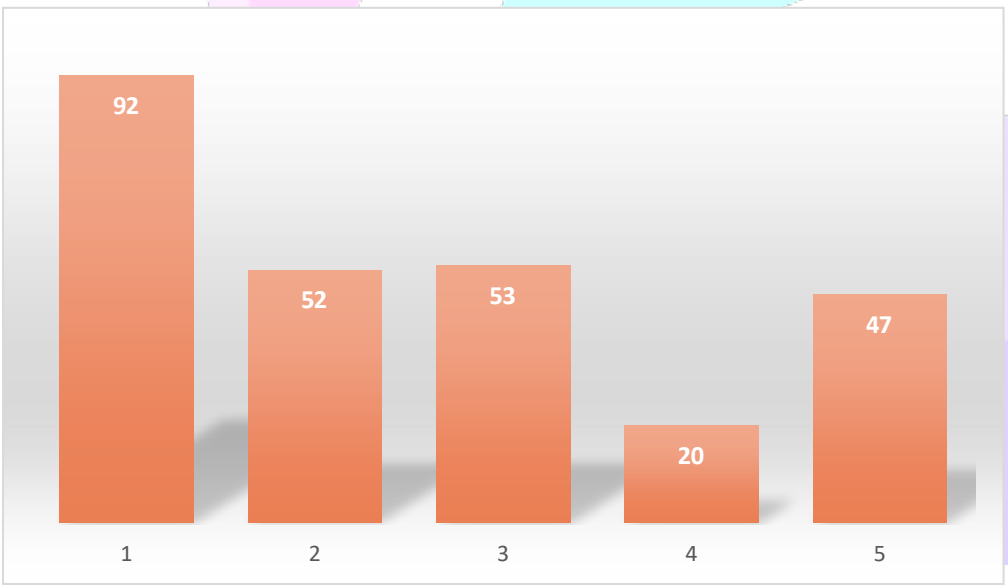
- **Handicraft (average: 2.78)**



- **Painting (average: 2.54)**



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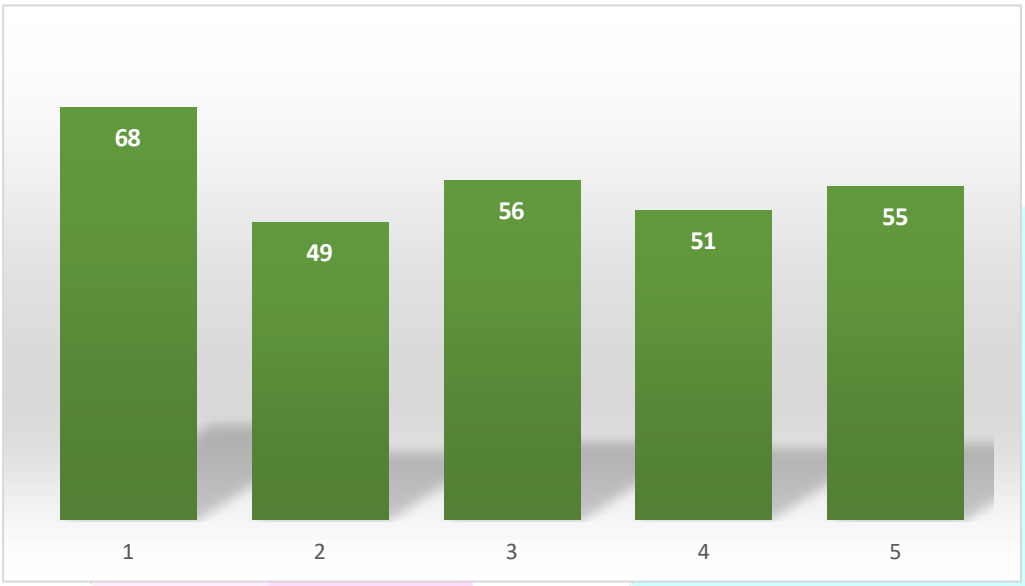
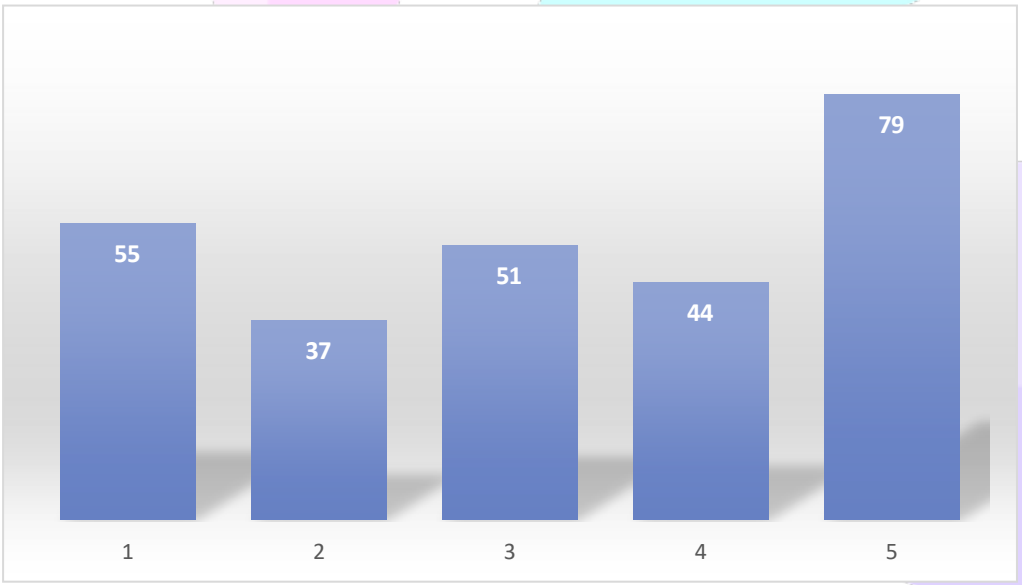
- **Music (average: 2.91)**



- **Photography (average: 3.21)**



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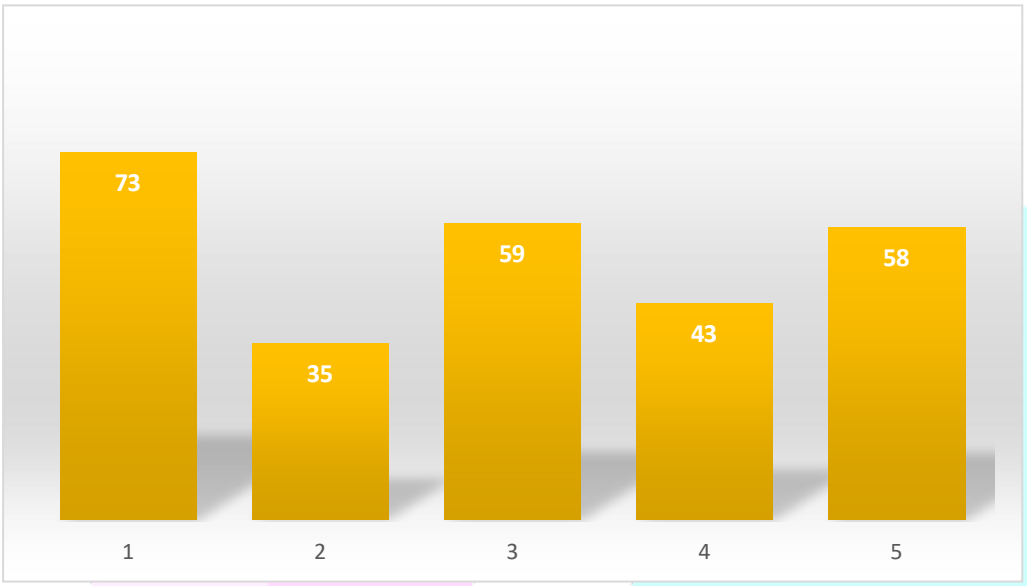
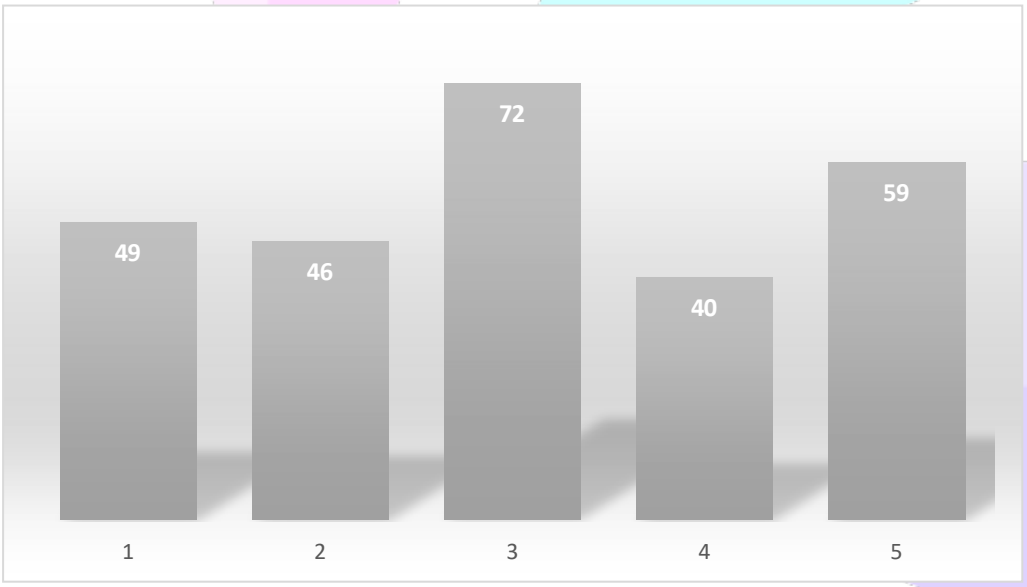
- **Cooking (average: 2.92)**



- **Literature and poetry (average: 3.05)**



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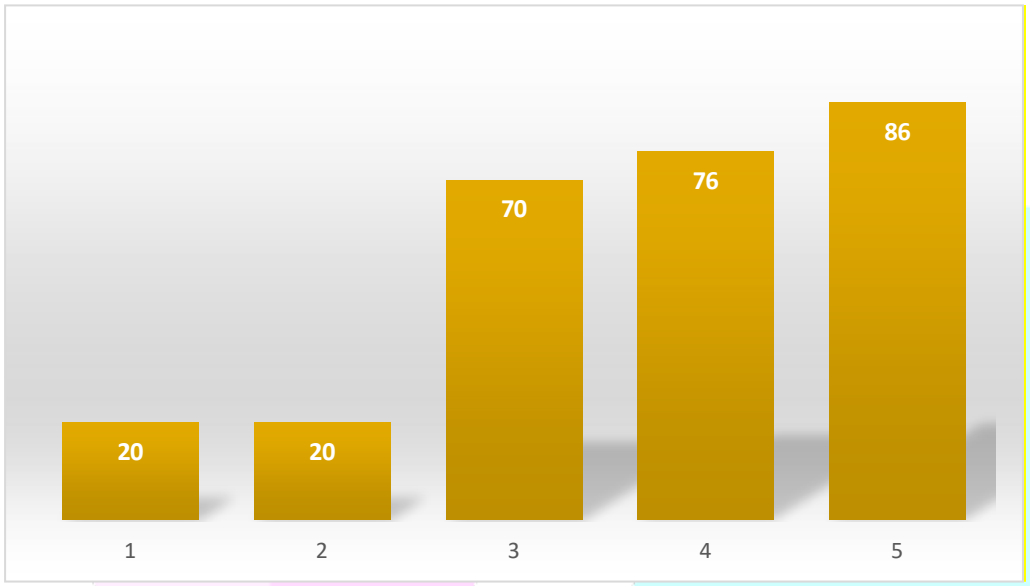
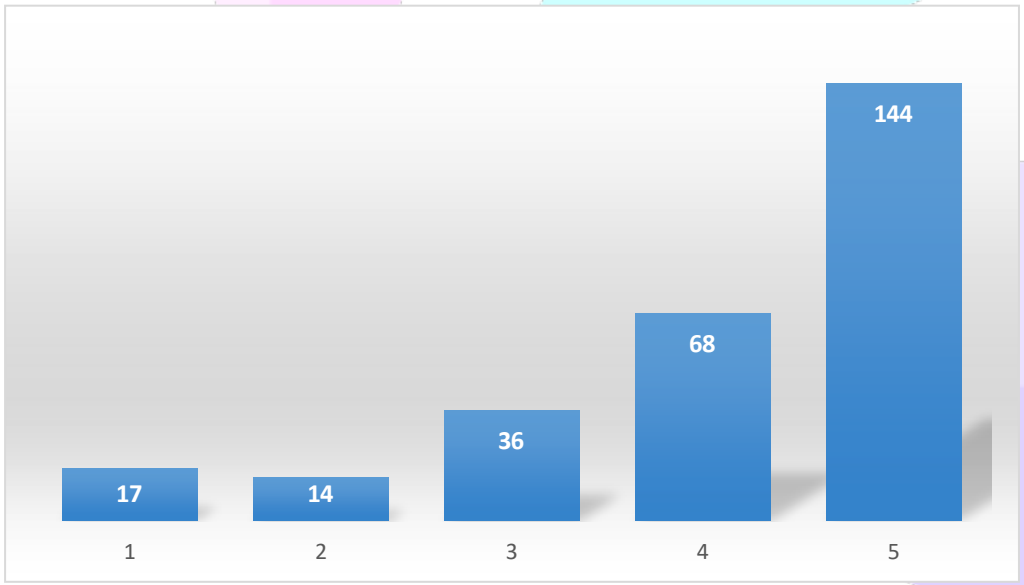
- **Creativity in daily life (average: 3.69)**



- **Brain training (average: 4.10)**



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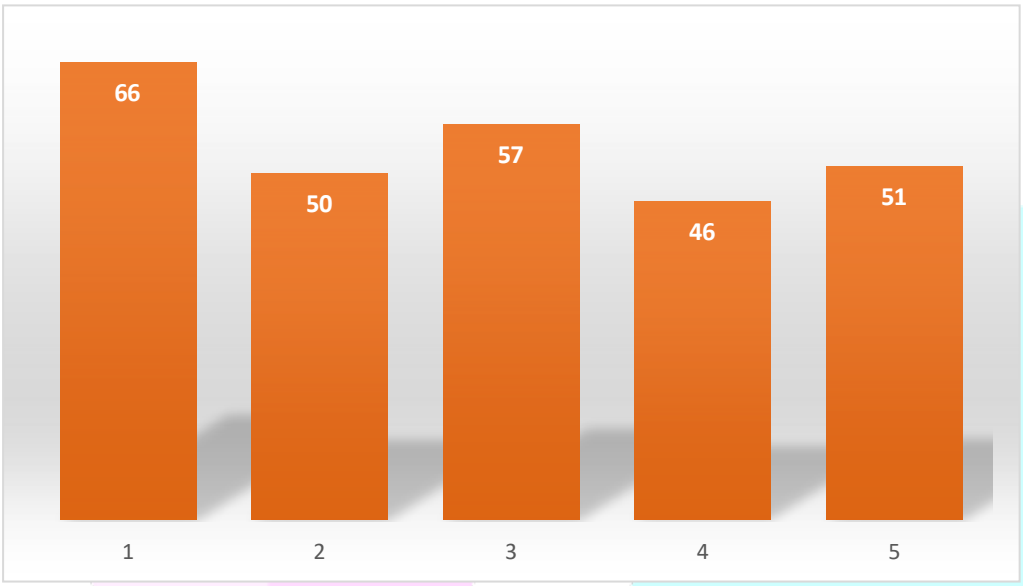
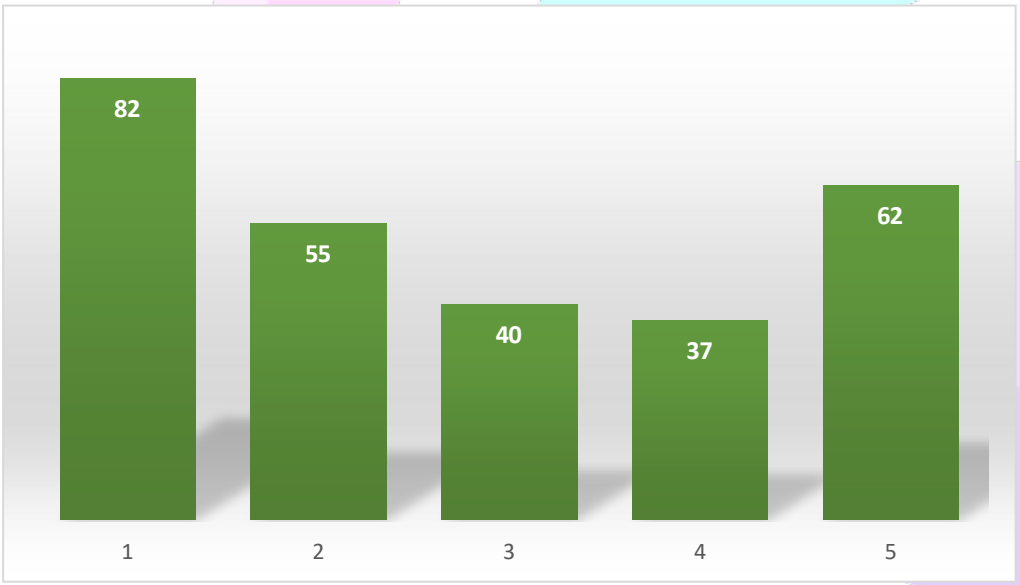
- **Sports (average: 2.87)**



- **Dancing (average: 2.79)**



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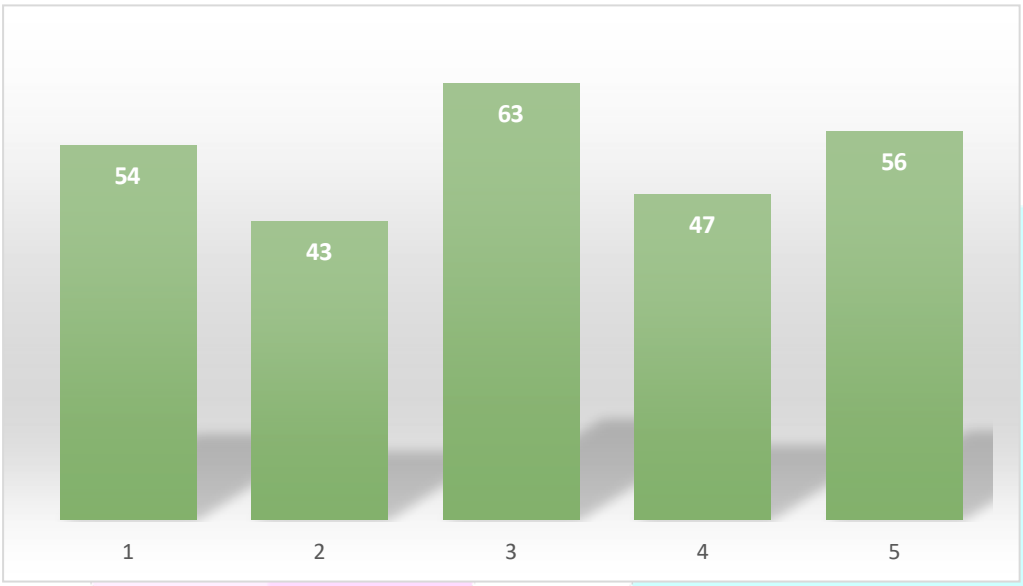
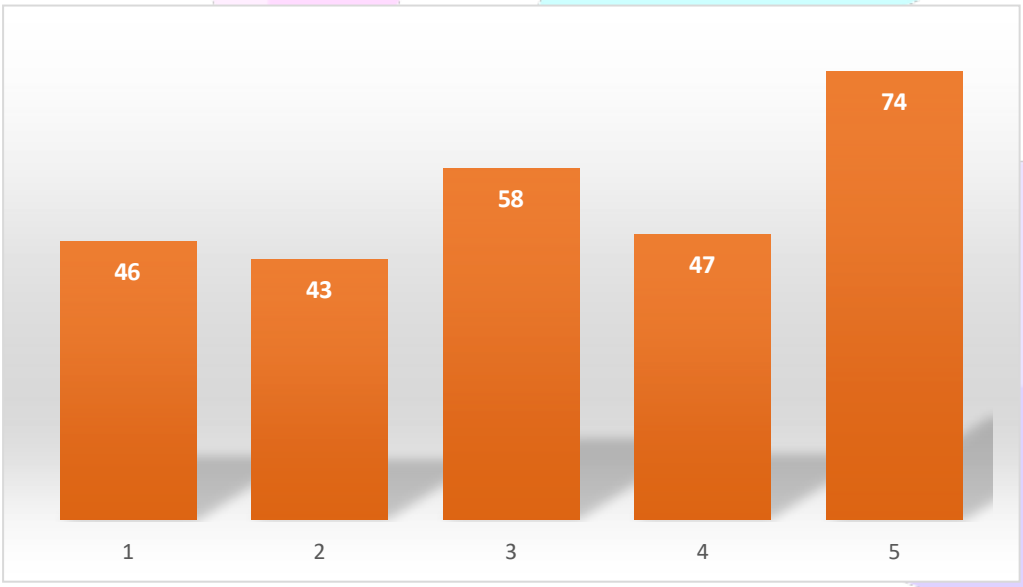
- **Art history (average: 3.03)**



- **Theatre (average: 3.22)**



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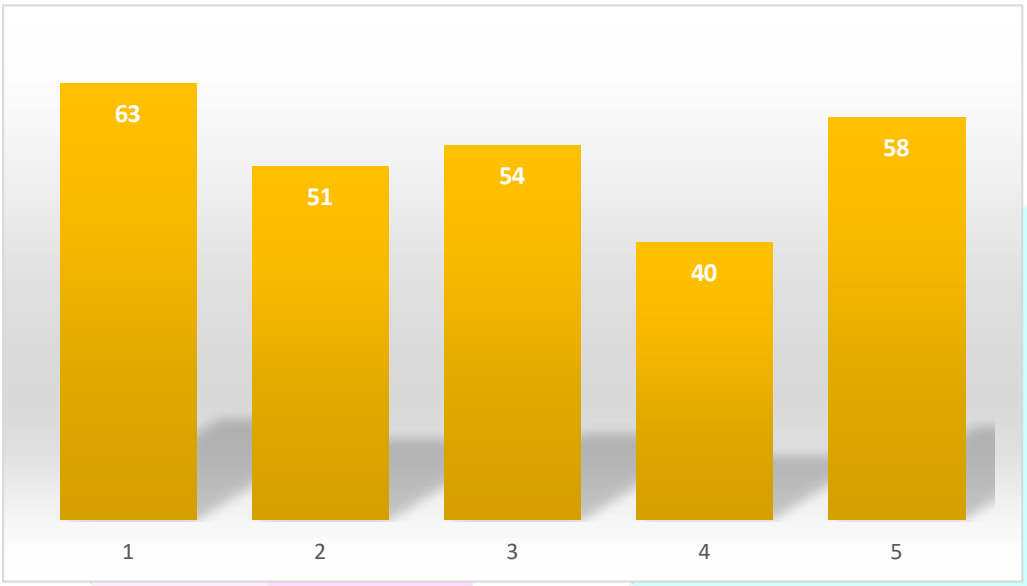
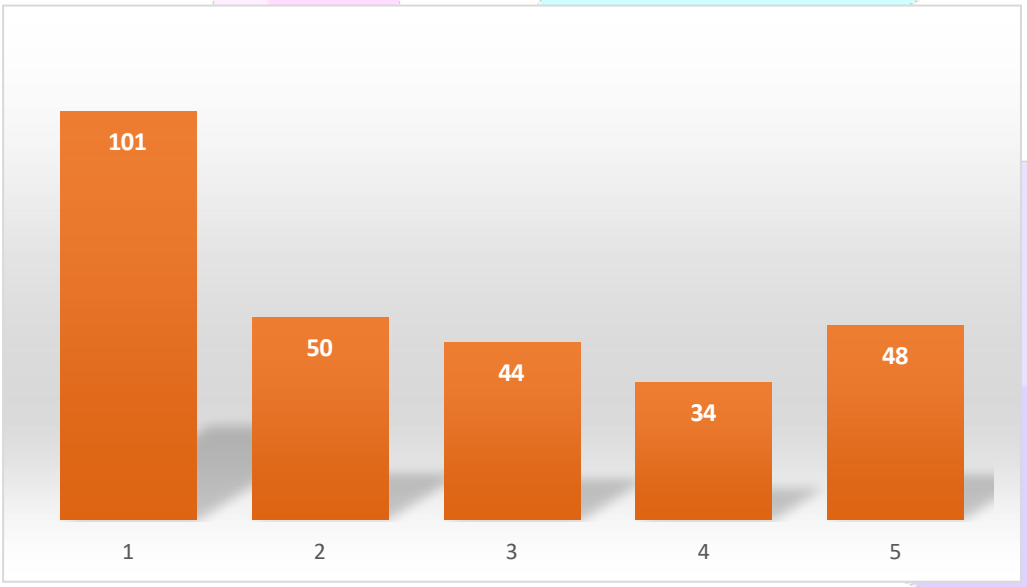
- **Storytelling (average: 2.92)**



- **Singing (average: 2.56)**



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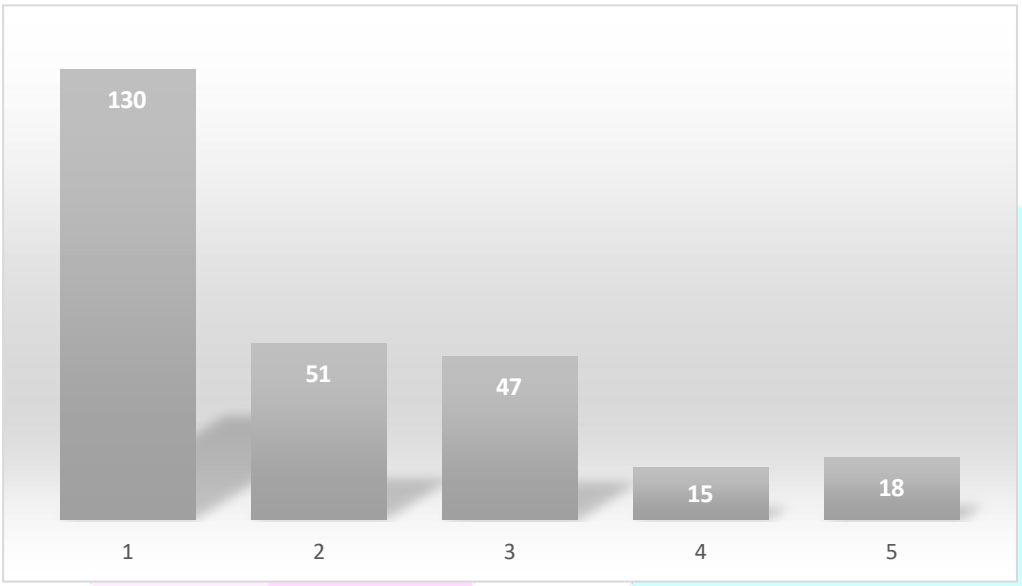
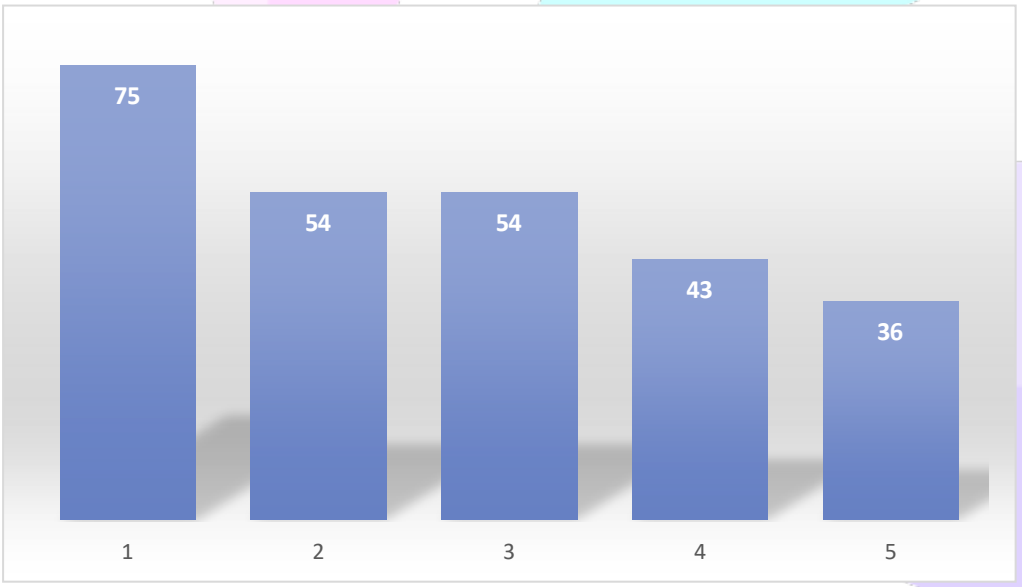
- **Sculpture (average: 2.00)**



- **Cinematography (average: 2.66)**



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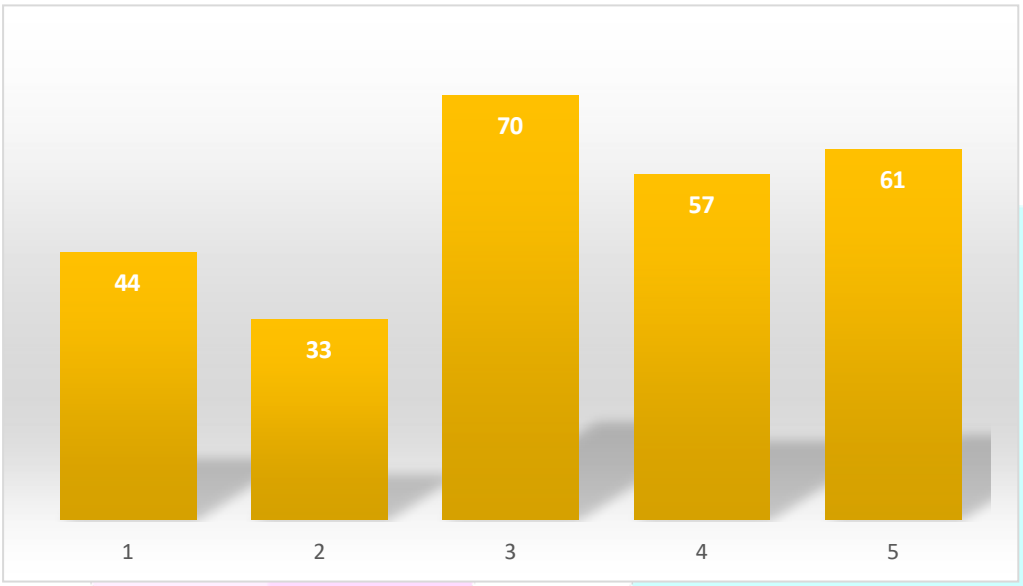
- **Soft skills: communication, motivation, self-management (average: 3.22)**



The seniors are mostly interested in brain training, computing and creativity in daily life. Next in the line are theatre, soft skills and photography. More traditional skills such as sculpting, handicraft and painting do not attract them so much as class topics.

The results clearly indicate that seniors are most interested in skills that were not available to them during their school and college education, but are very important in the modern world.

There are some distinct regional differences. For example, Portuguese seniors expressed more interest in crafts and painting than others, and much more in music. Czech Republic seniors have a greater demand for courses in photography, art history, literature and poetry than the rest. Seniors from Poland and Portugal are willing to participate in sports and dance activities, while respondents from Greece, Cyprus and the Czech Republic rated this topic very low. Greeks and Cypriots are not interested in theatre and singing, the subject of cinematography was highly appreciated by Poles, and they are also definitely the most interested in soft skills among the studied groups.

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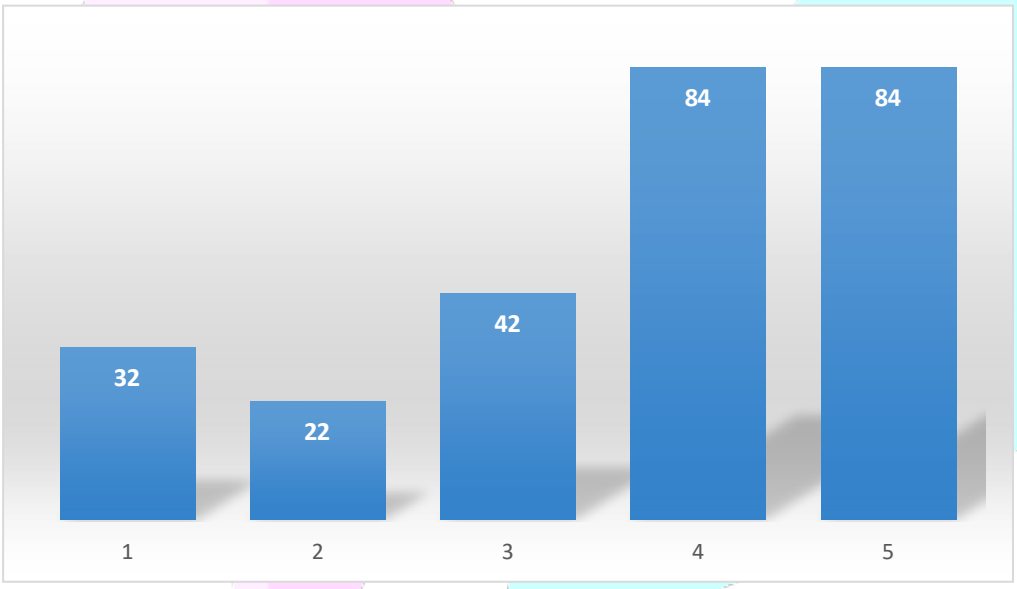
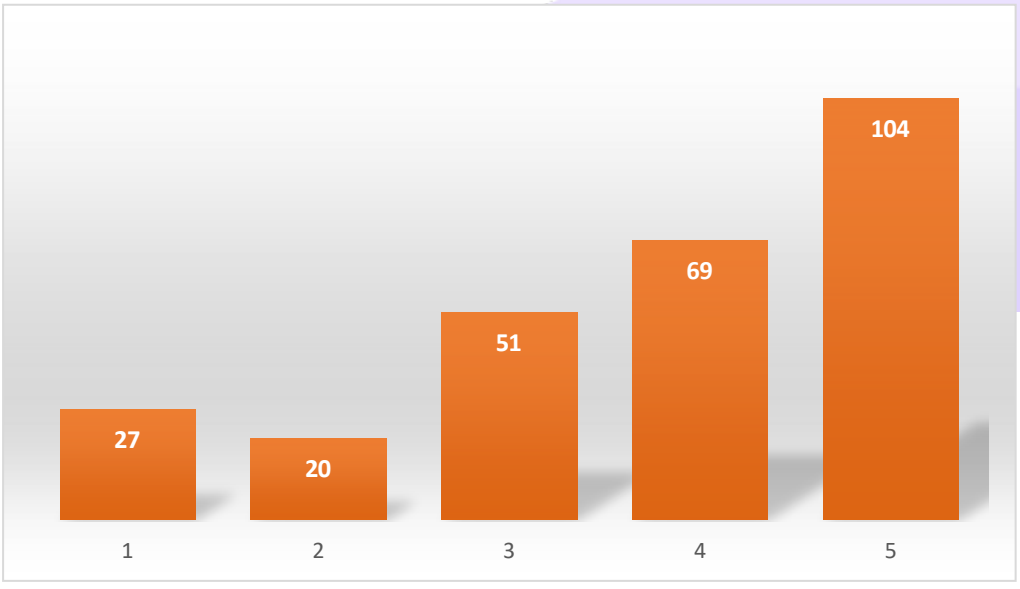
15. **Please, evaluate which of the listed topics would be the most useful for you in a Training programme: Culture & creativity in the digital world? (scale from 1 up to 5 where 1 means very useless and 5 very useful)**

- **Communication and collaboration – sending e-mails, running FB, surfing the Internet (average: 3.63)**



- **Useful applications to stay in touch with family and friends (average: 3.75)**



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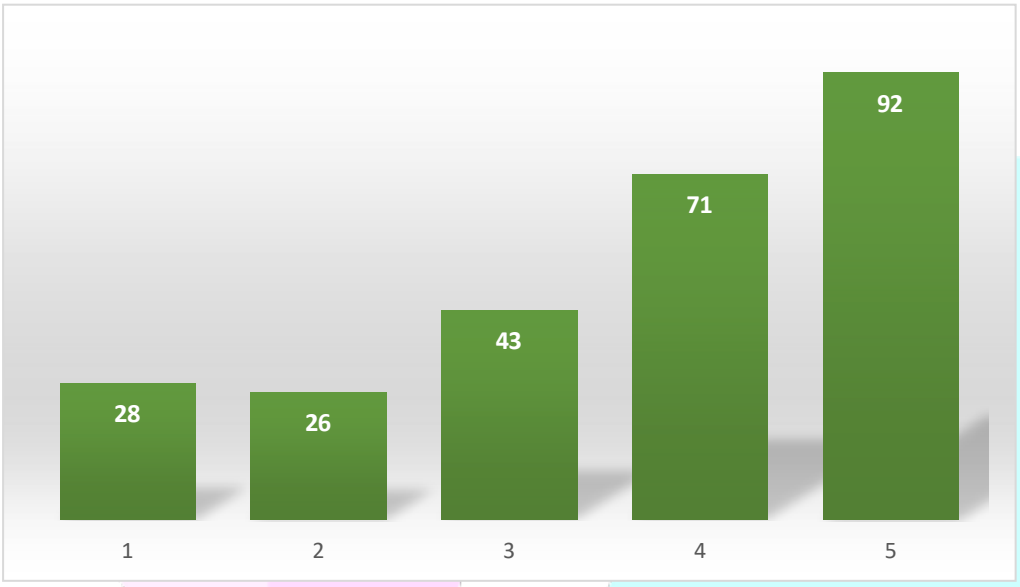
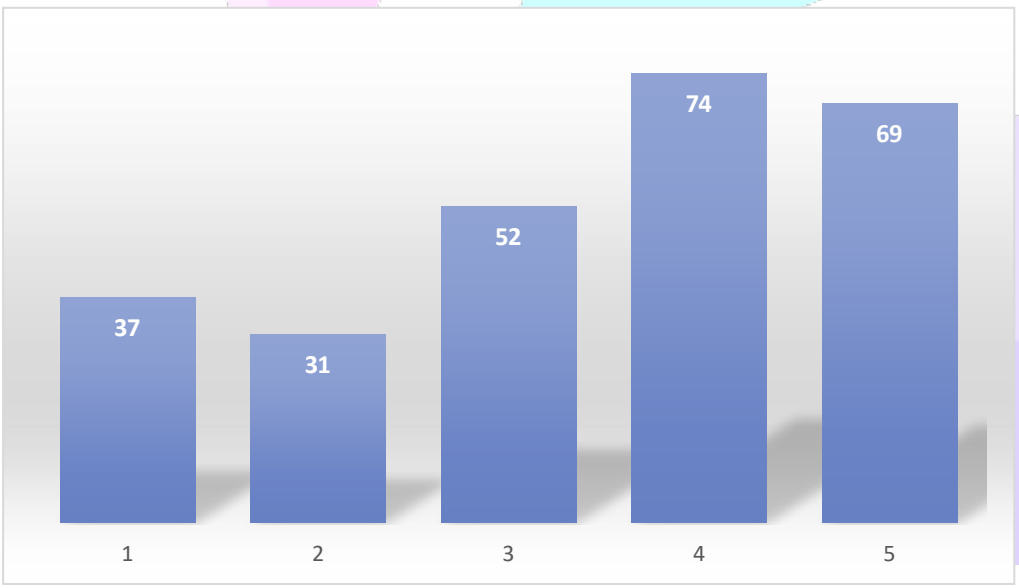
- **Applications for daily use (average: 3.67)**



- **Sharing experience online (average: 3.40)**



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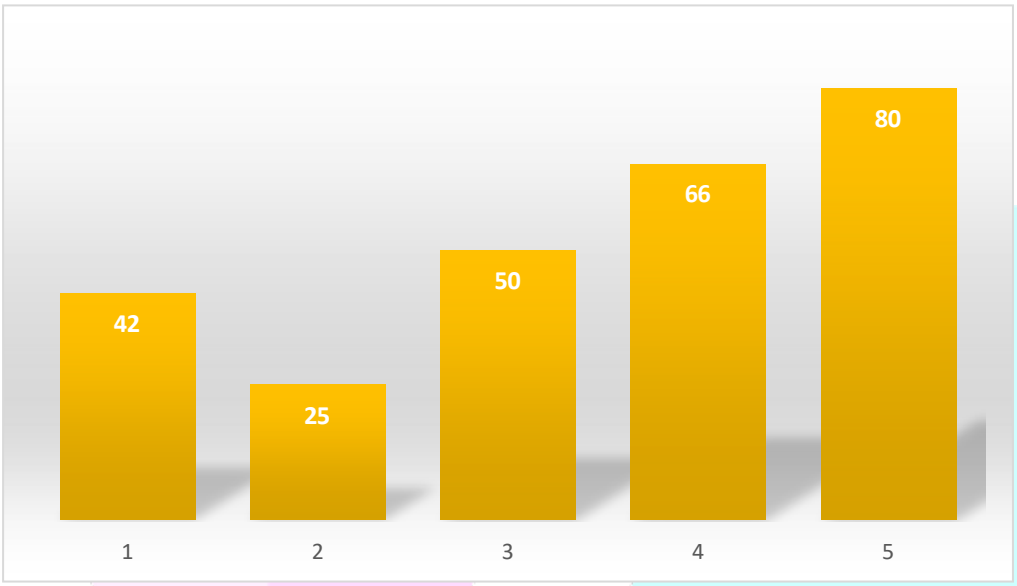
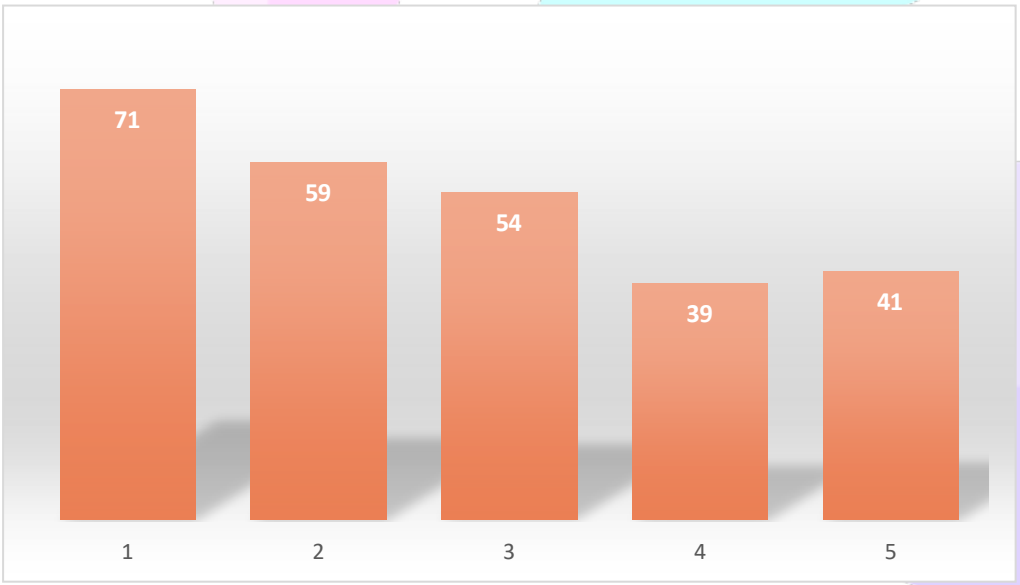
- **Creativity in solving problems (average: 3.44)**



- **Digital drawing/painting (average: 2.70)**



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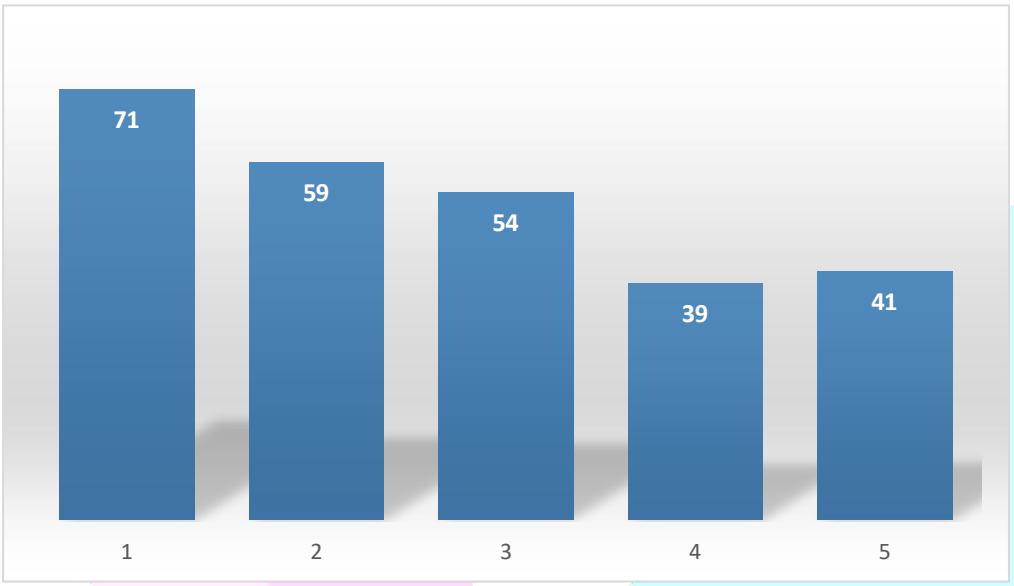
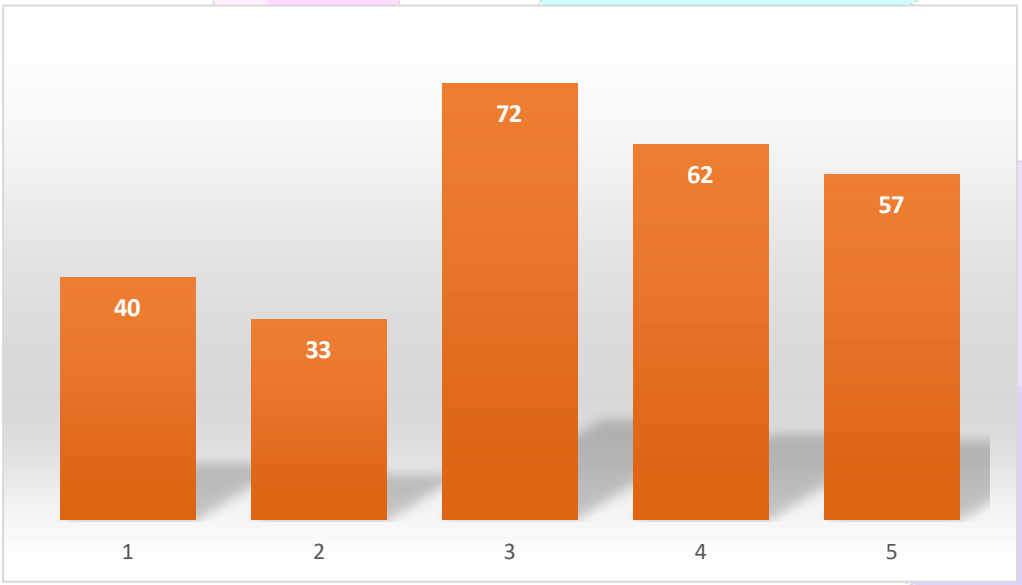
- **Photo editing (average: 3.17)**



- **Sharing opinions and information – citizens´ engagement (average: 3.24)**



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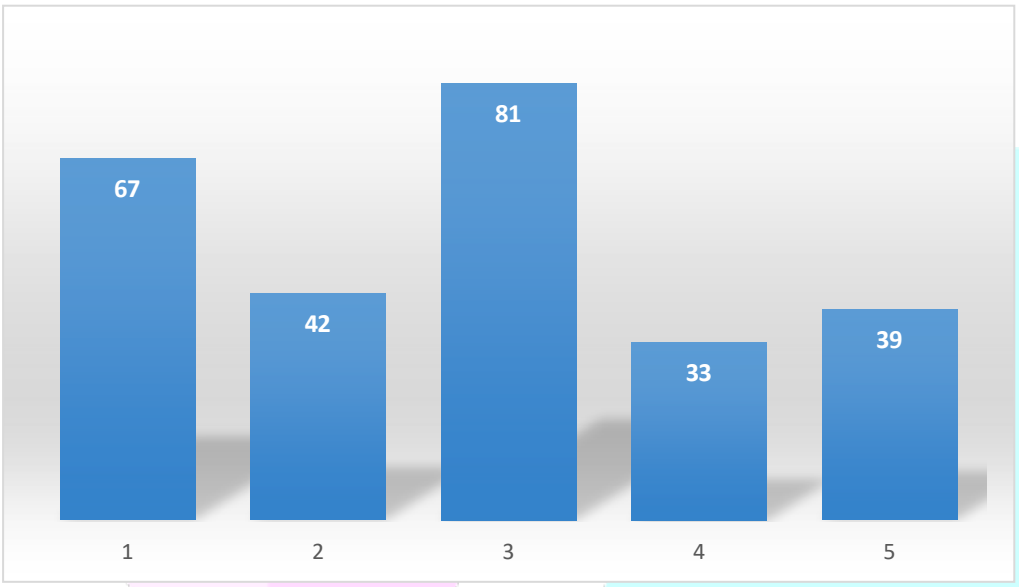
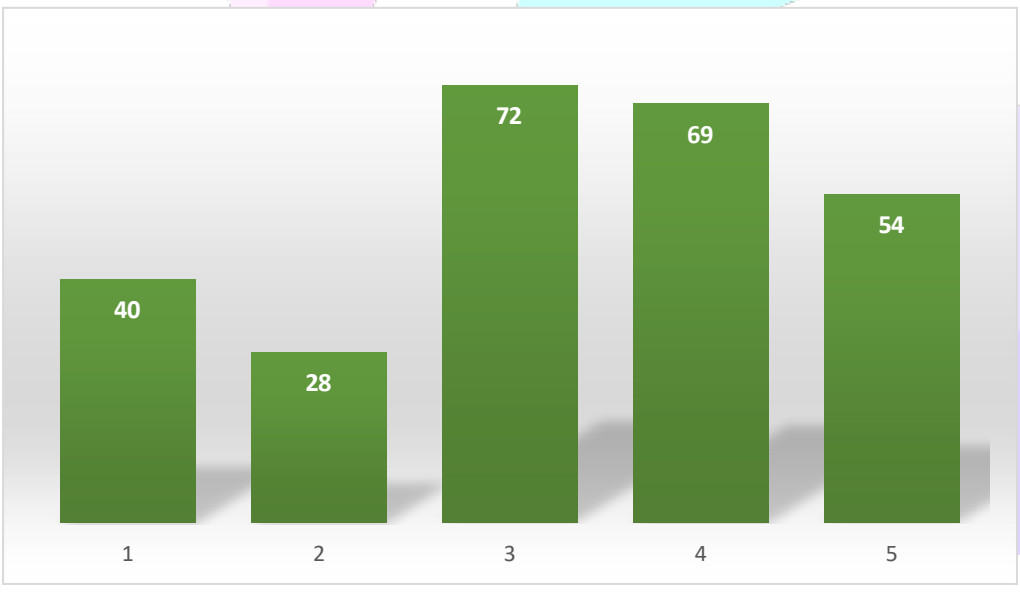
- **Amateur production of digital content – prosumers, i.e. consumers of digital culture expressing relationship to it via the content of own making (average: 2.75)**



- **Use of the internet for purposes related to cultural heritage (average: 3.26)**



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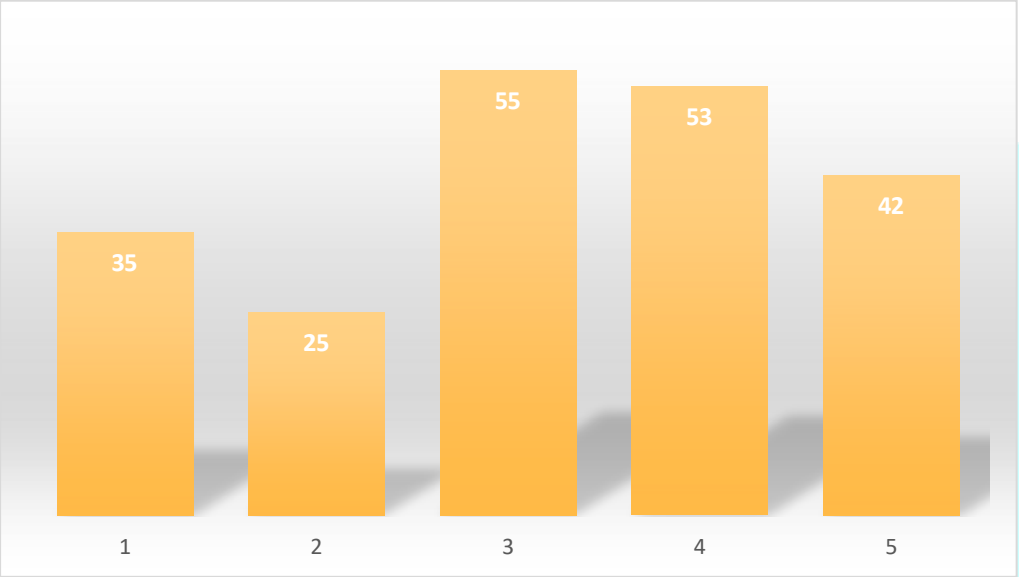
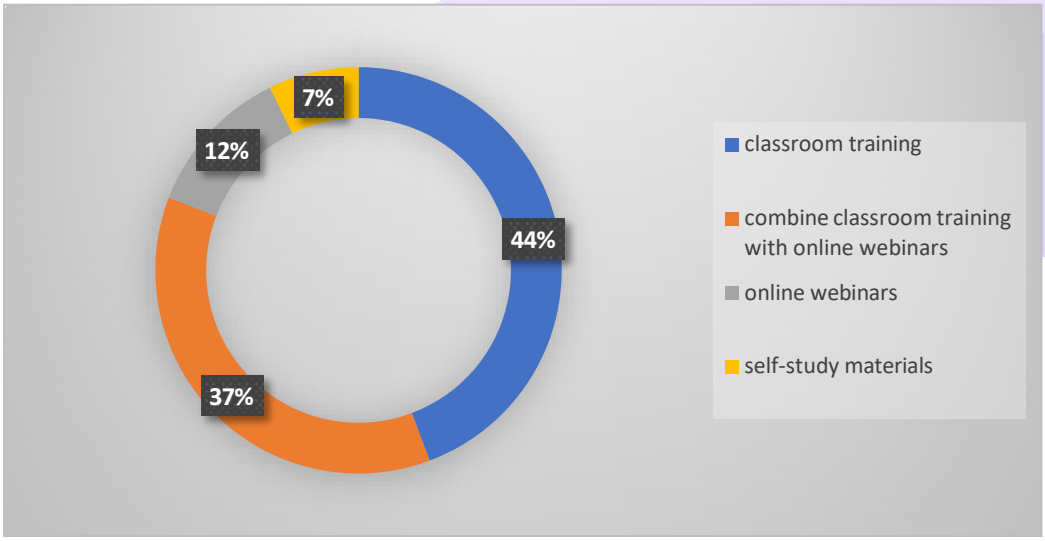
- **Soft skills workshop – expressing an opinion, Nonviolent Communication (NVC), assertiveness etc. (average: 3.20)**



In the case of the possibility of participating in a digital creativity training programme, seniors would be most interested in communication via applications and social networks, whether using PCs or smartphones. They also are highly interested in applications for daily use, creative problem solving, sharing experiences and opinions on the Web and soft skills. Their digital creativity is currently less connected with the visual arts like painting or image editing.

16. Which method of delivery do you prefer in a training?



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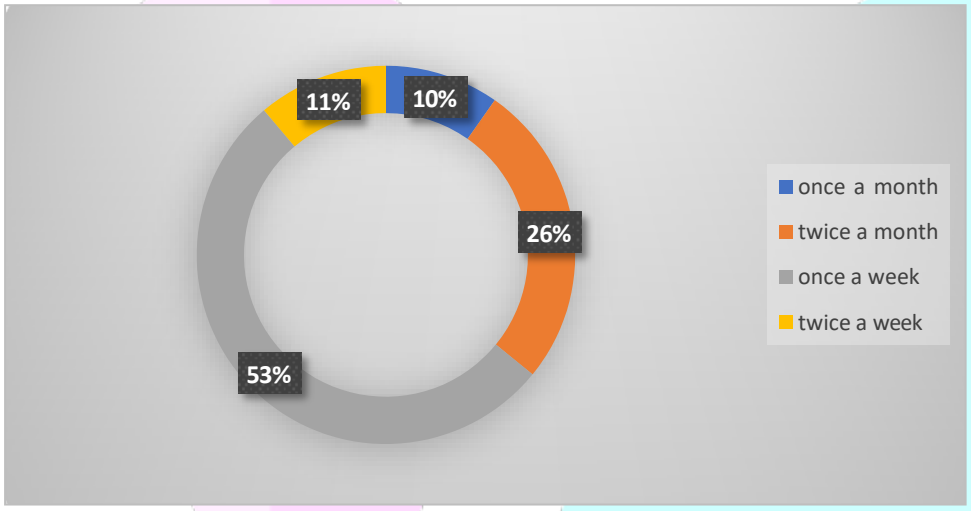
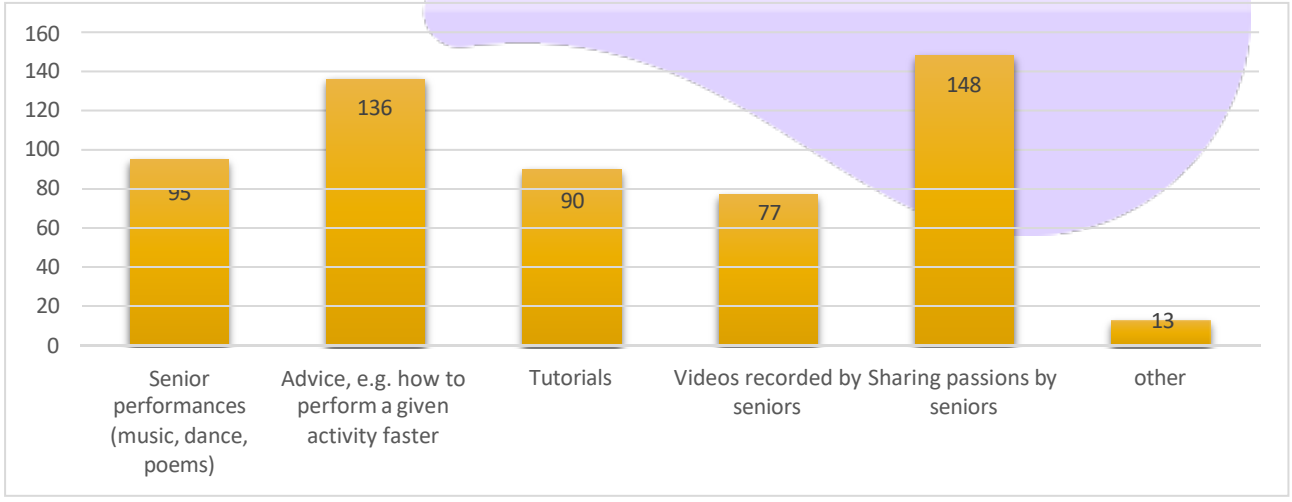
When it comes to education, most seniors prefer classroom training or a combination of full-time and online study. Less than 10% of seniors prefer self-study via the internet. Bigger interest in online learning was expressed only by seniors from Cyprus.

17. If you participate in the training course, how often would you like the sessions to take place?



Almost 40 per cent of Portuguese seniors expressed their willingness to participate in the classes twice a week. In other groups, about 5 per cent of the respondents expressed the willingness to participate so intensively. Seniors prefer education 1 x week or 1 x per two weeks.

18. During the project we are going to develop Senior tube – a channel where seniors can share their video recordings. What would you like to see there?



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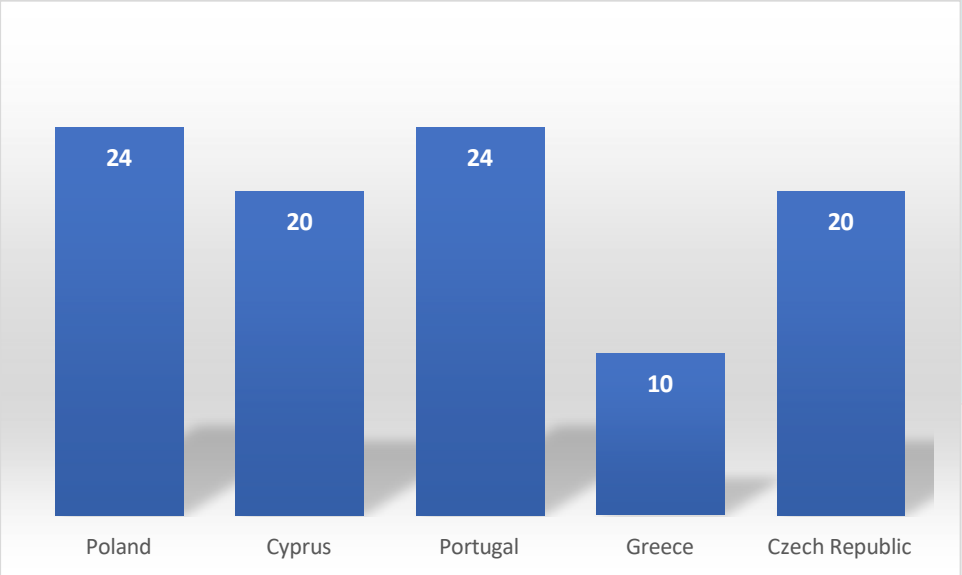
More than 50% of seniors prefer sharing hobbies and posting various "gadgets". There is also interest in sharing knowledge (almost 50%), in recordings of senior performances, concerts, etc. (33%) and videos made by seniors themselves (almost 30%). 31% of seniors are interested in education on this channel.

3.2 Survey among trainers / educators of seniors

1. Number of respondents



Most people participated in the survey in Poland and Portugal, only 10 coaches were surveyed in Greece.

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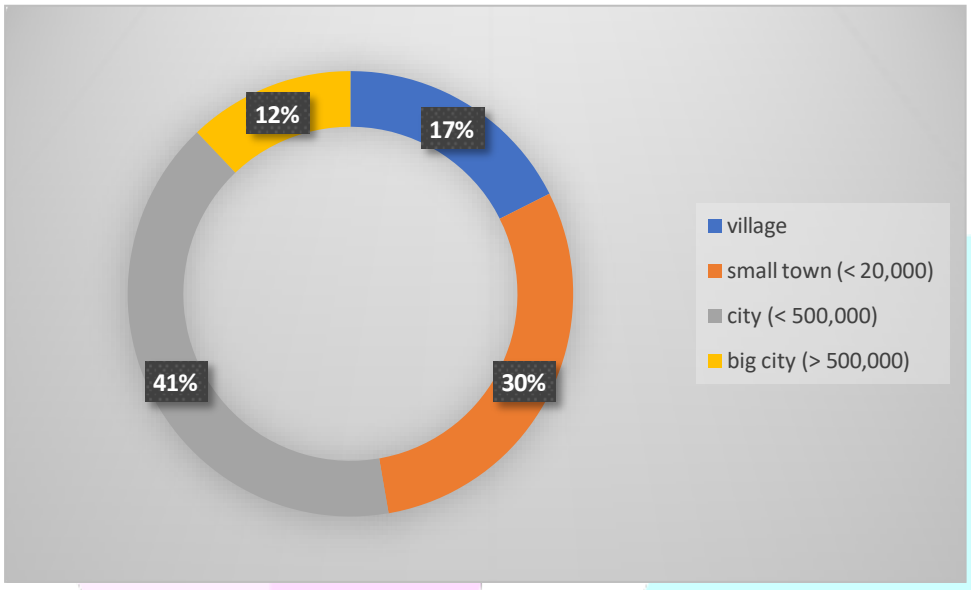
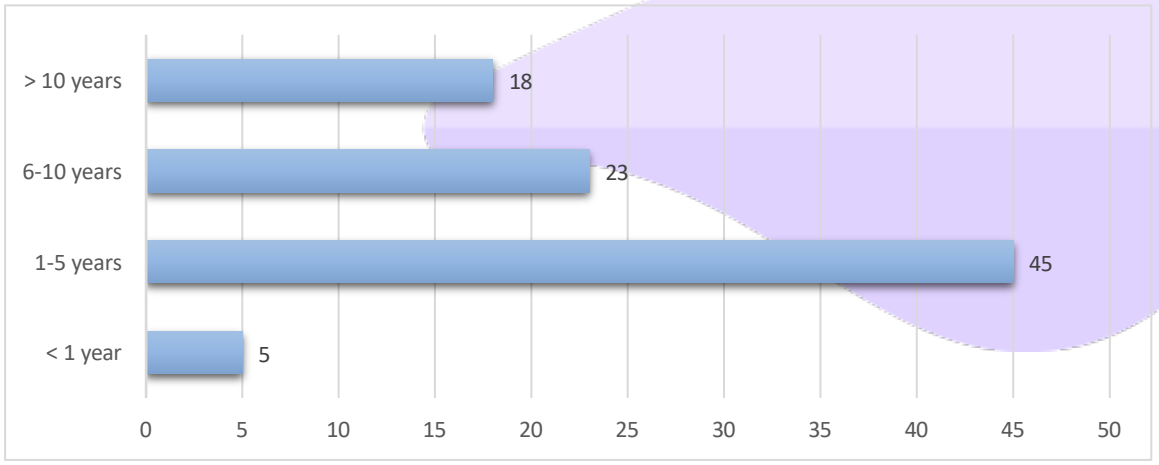
2. Place of work



47 per cent of the trainers work in the countryside and small towns, 53 per cent in medium and large cities.

The national differences largely coincide with the differences in the origin of the surveyed seniors. In the case of Poland, 88% of respondents operate in rural areas and small towns. Among the Greek coaches who participated in the survey, 90% operate in medium and large cities.

3. How long have you been conducting courses for seniors?



55% of trainers do not have experience for more than five years and nearly 20% of the respondents work with seniors for longer than a decade. The most experienced group of

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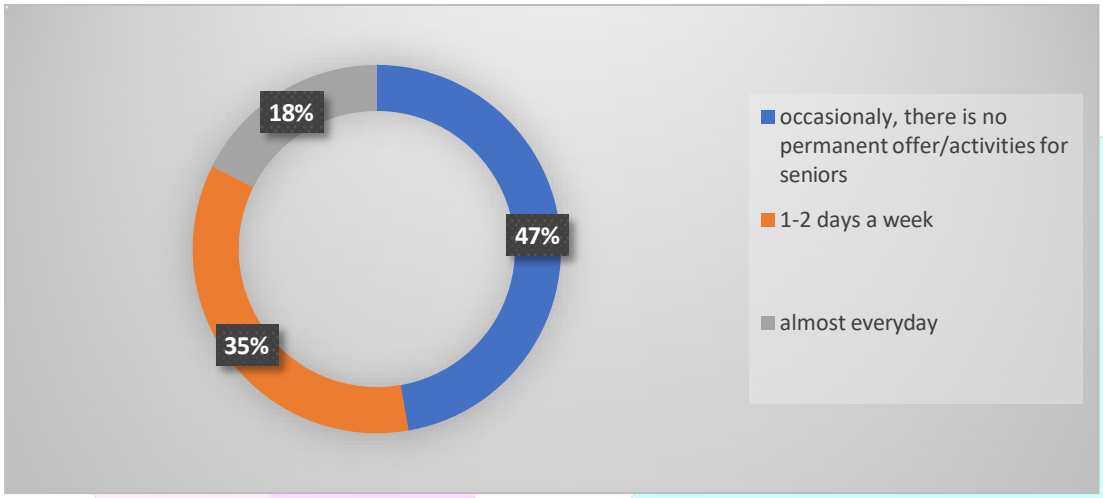
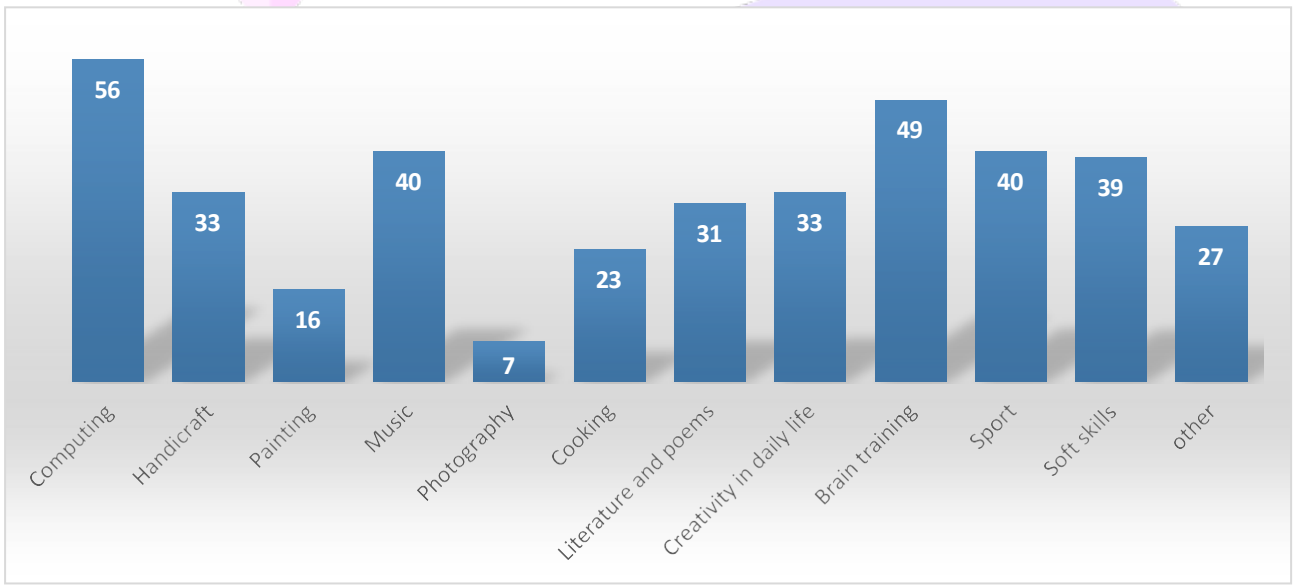
respondents are trainers from the Czech Republic.

4. How often do you conduct courses for seniors?



Most of the trainers run classes occasionally. This is especially true of respondents from the Czech Republic and Cyprus. The situation is different in Portugal, where none of the surveyed trainers work with seniors occasionally, most of them conduct 1-2 classes a week.

5. What activities/classes does your institution/non-governmental organization offer to seniors? (you can choose more than one answer)



More than half of the trainers work in institutions that conduct computing and brain training classes

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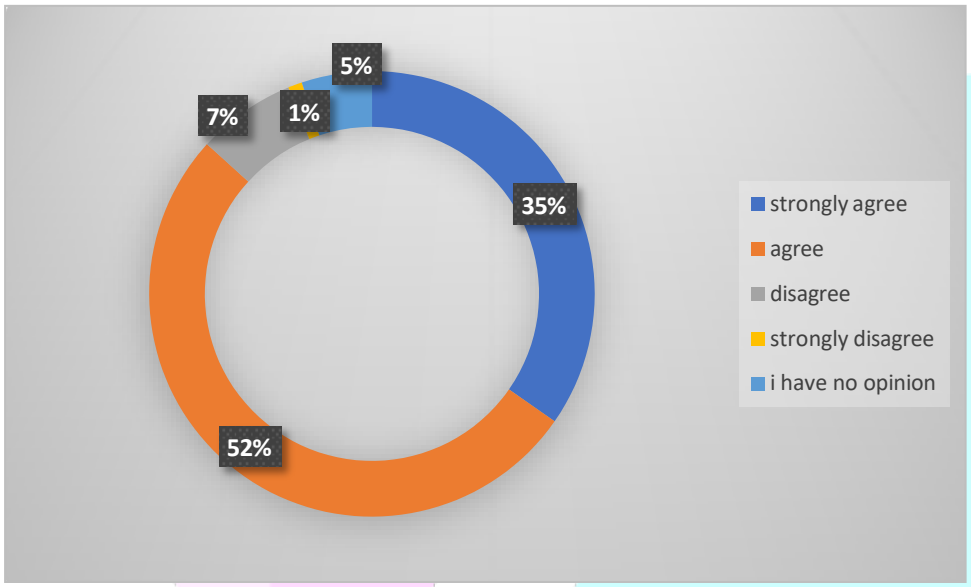
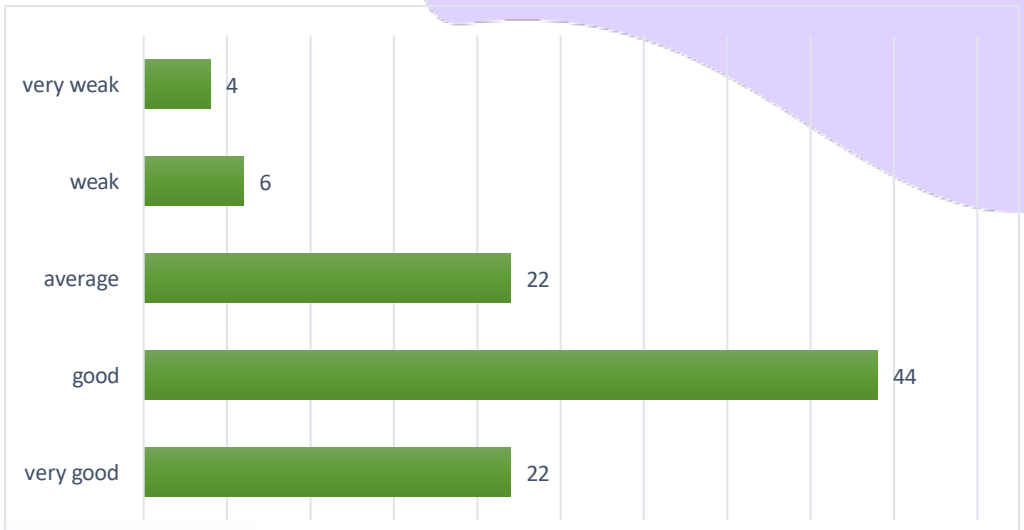
with seniors. As the survey shows, the offer of educational institutions generally meets the needs of seniors. This does not apply to Poland, where computing was selected by only 9 out of 24 trainers, and brain training – only 5 out of 24.

6. The Covid-19 situation has changed the way you work



Only 8% of the respondents believe COVID-19 has not affected their work. As in the case of seniors, the trainers from Poland were the least affected by the pandemic – one in four of whom did not observe the impact of COVID-19 on their work. These data do not reflect the situation in Poland, where the morbidity and mortality rates are high.

7. What is your level of competence in conducting online classes (e.g. using Zoom, GoogleMeet or other online tools)?



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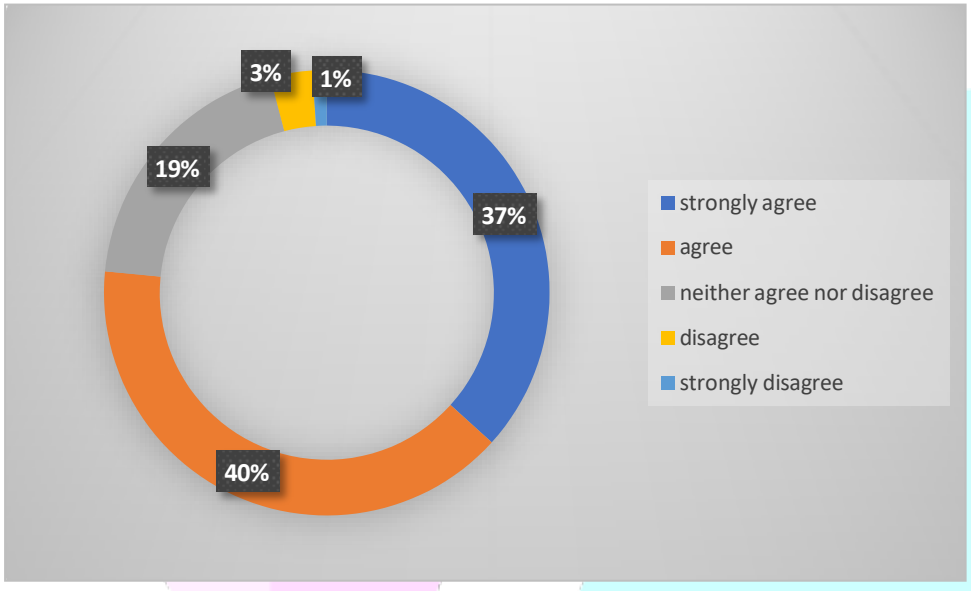
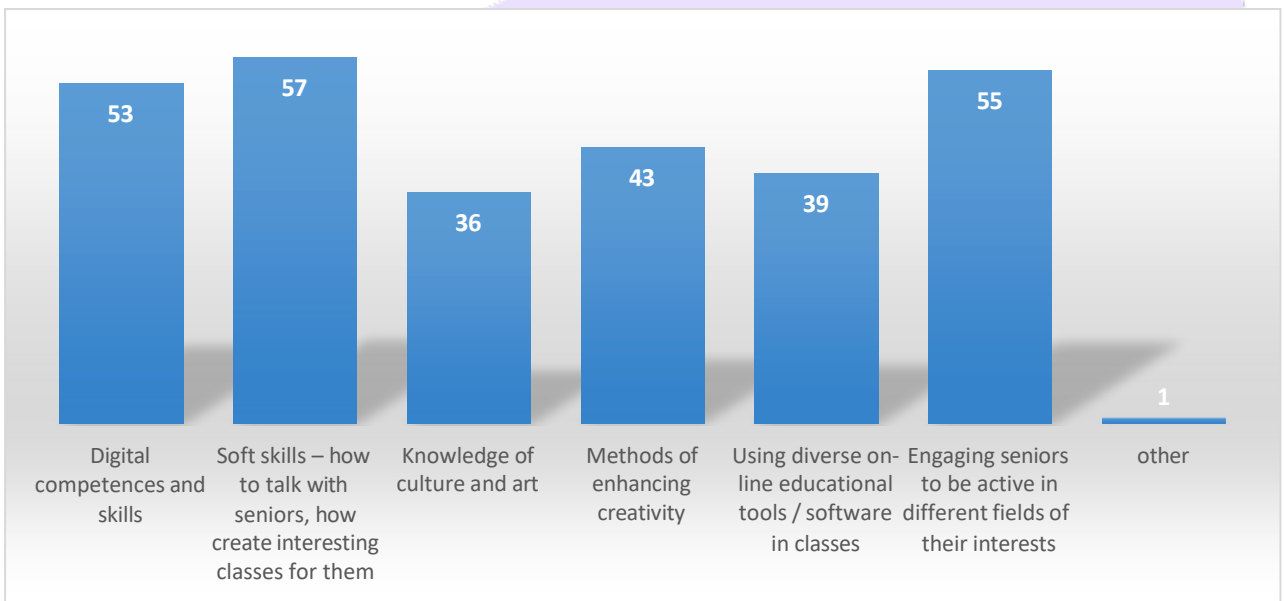
Computer literacy of individual lecturers – teachers – vary according to the area they focus on. Overall, two-thirds of the respondents assessed their competencies as good or very good.

8. Local seniors are eager to take part in activities offered by our institution/NGO



There is a clear difference between the overall survey result and the result in Greece, where only 30% of the trainers chose "agree", none – "strongly agree". However, this was the smallest group of respondents, only 10 coaches from Greece took part in the survey.

9. What kind of skills would you like to develop as an educator? Choose the 3 most important answers.



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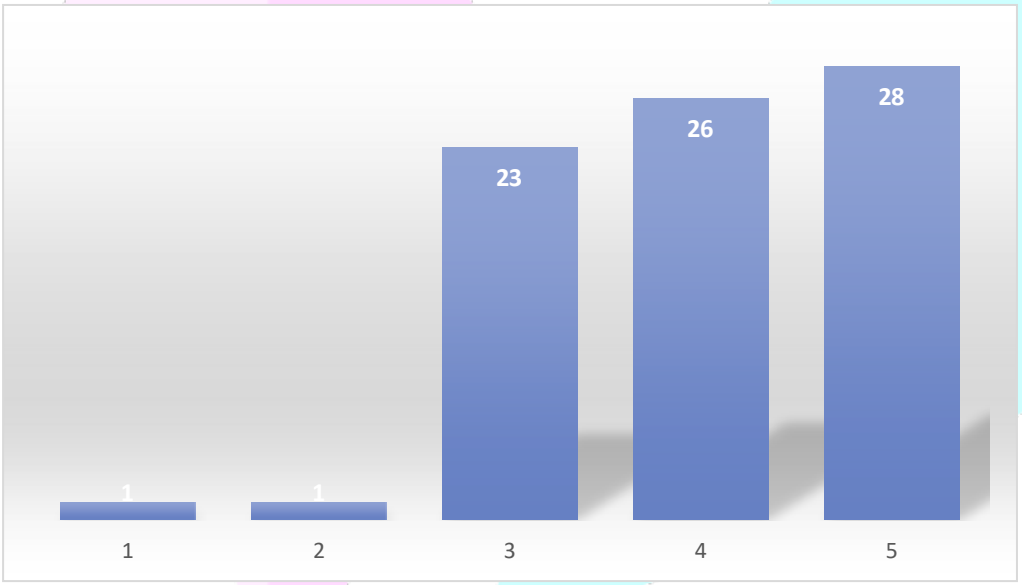
According to most teachers, it is necessary to involve seniors as actively as possible in their field of interest, in which the development of digital competences would be very helpful.

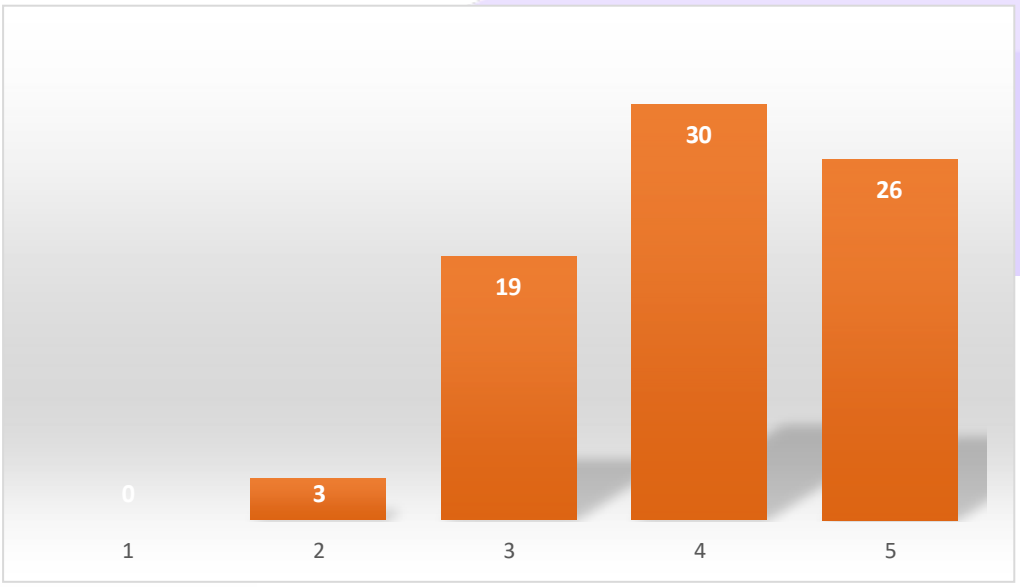
10. What would be the most useful topic for a lesson targeted at seniors?

- **Communication and cooperation –**

  sending e-mails, running Facebook, using the Internet (average: 4.00)



- **Useful internet applications to communicate with other people (average: 4.01)**



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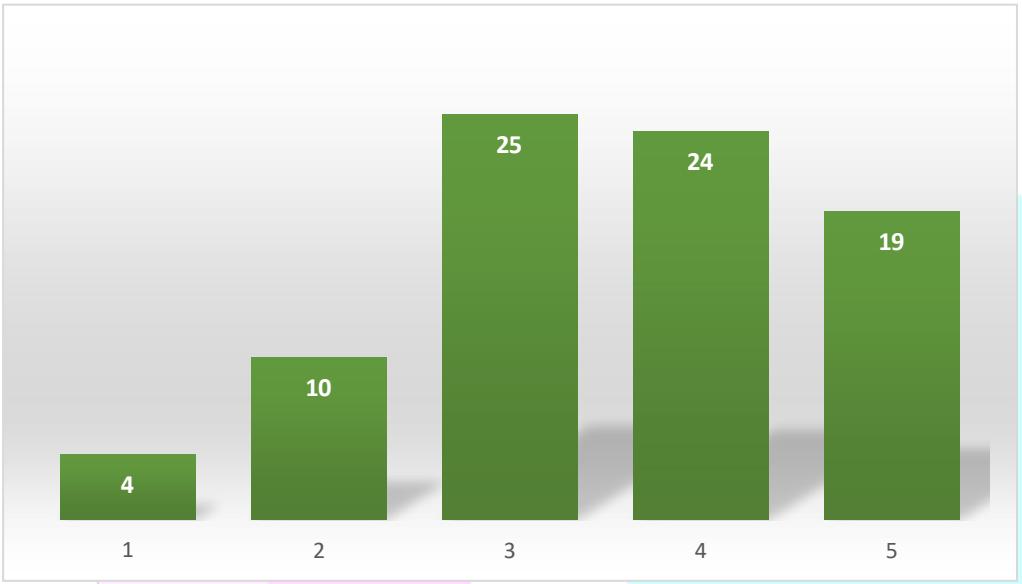
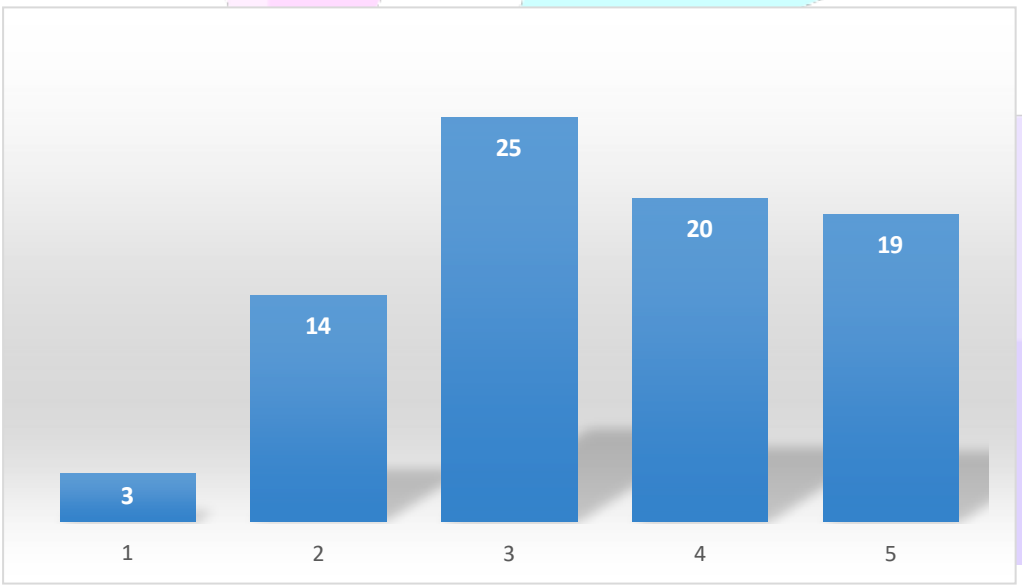
- **Applications for daily use (average: 3.54)**



- **Sharing experience online (average: 3.47)**



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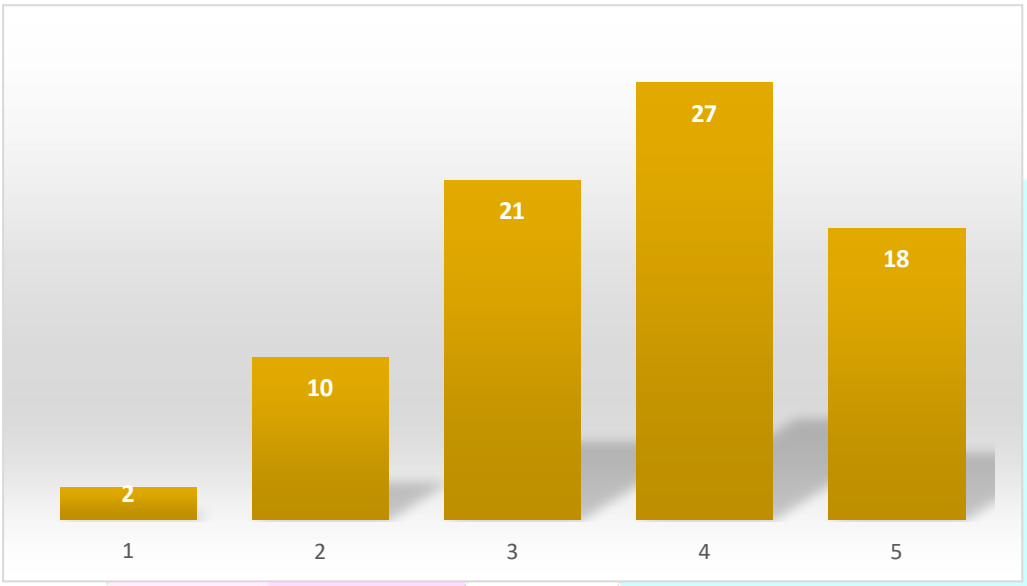
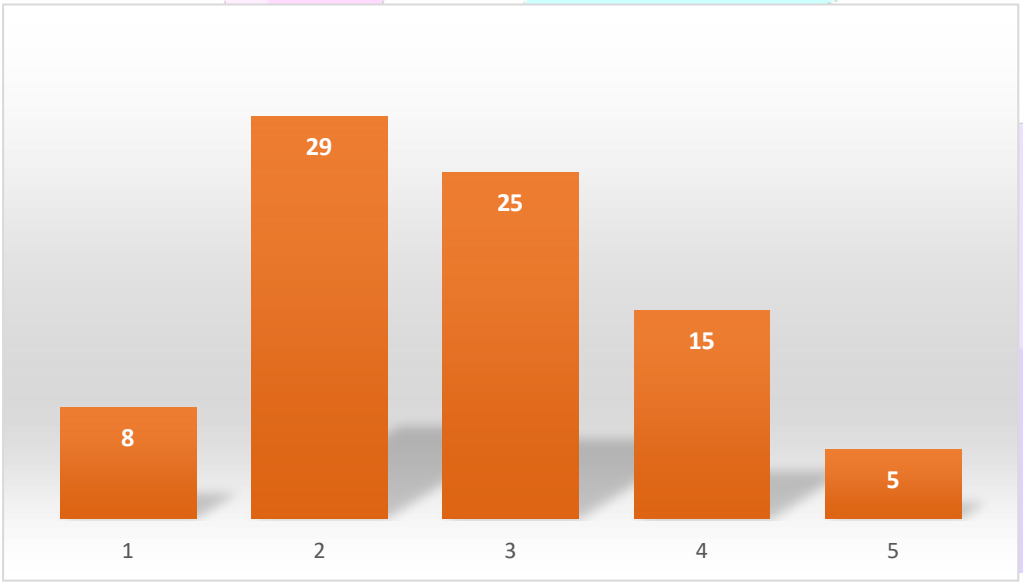
- **Creativity in solving problems (average: 3.63)**



- **Digital painting / drawing (average: 2.76)**



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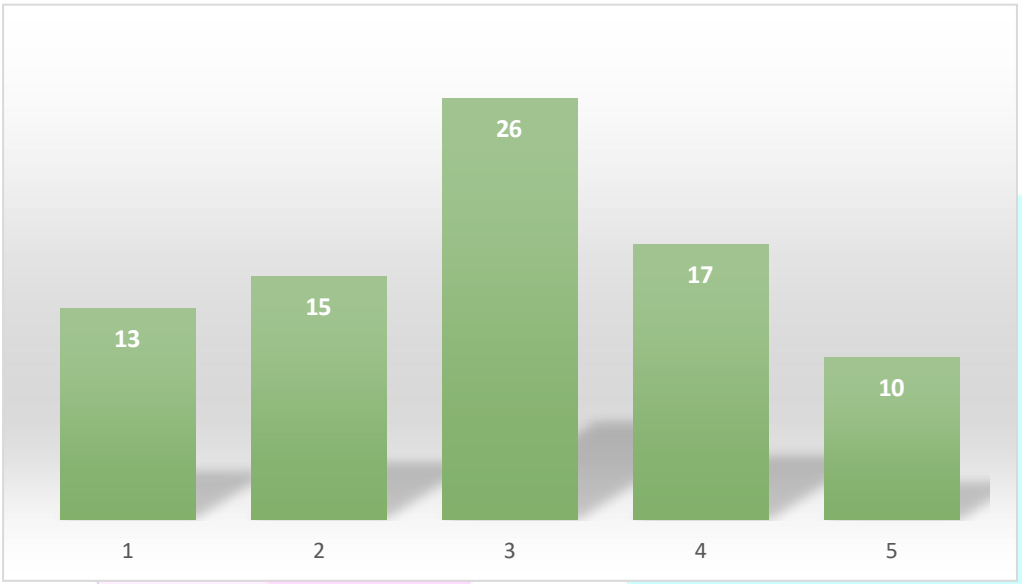
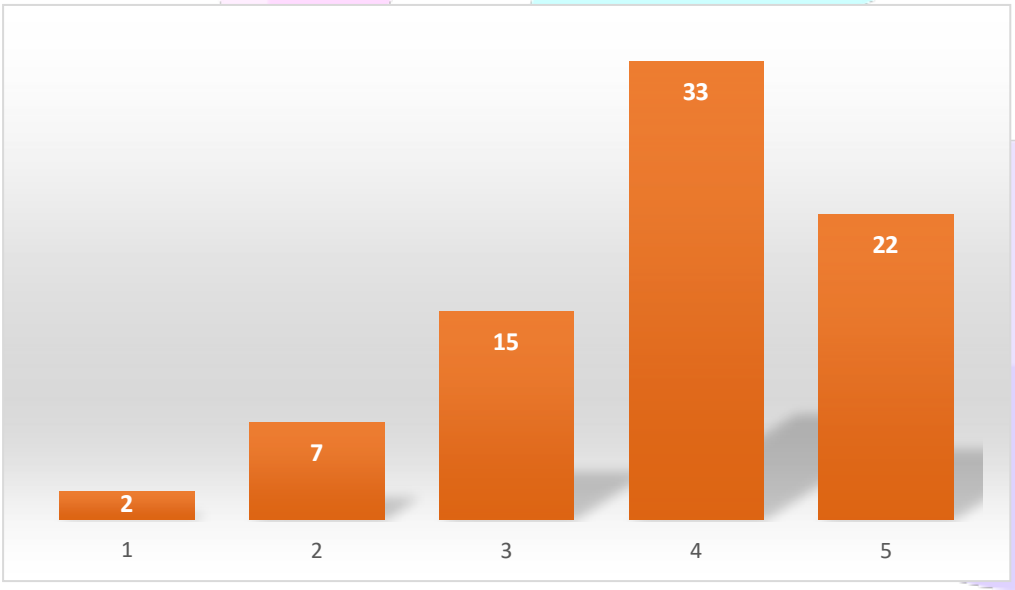
- **Photo editing (average: 2.95)**



- **Sharing opinions and information – citizens' engagement (average: 3.84)**



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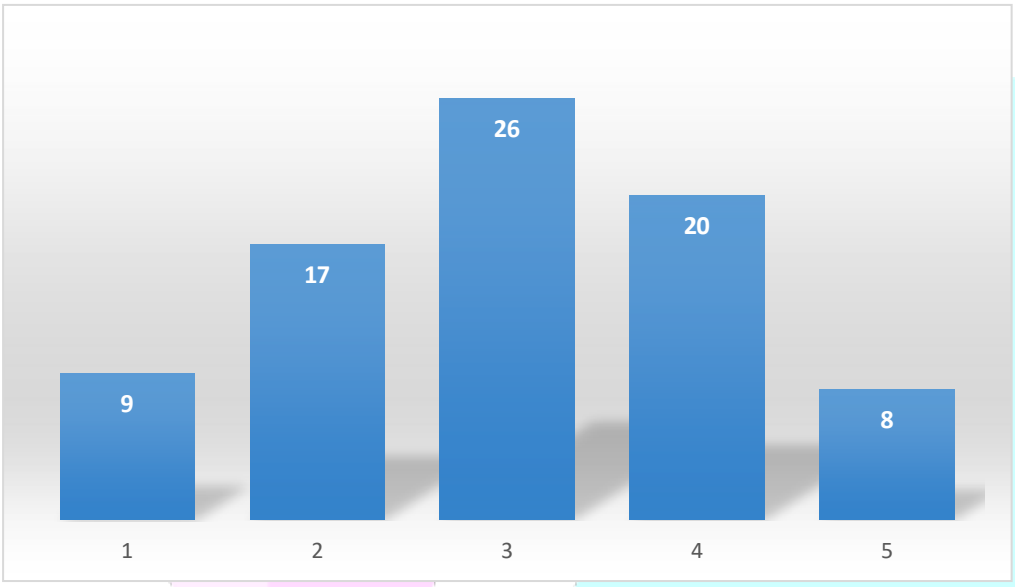
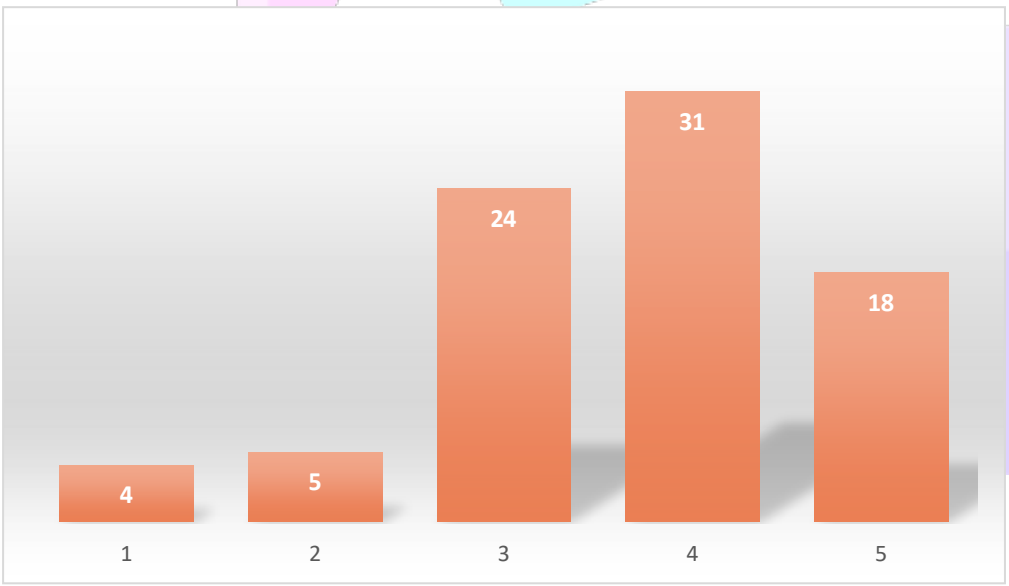
- **Amateur production of digital content – prosumers, i.e. consumers of digital culture expressing a relationship to it via the content of own making (average: 3.01)**



- **Use of the internet for purposes related to cultural heritage (average: 3.66)**



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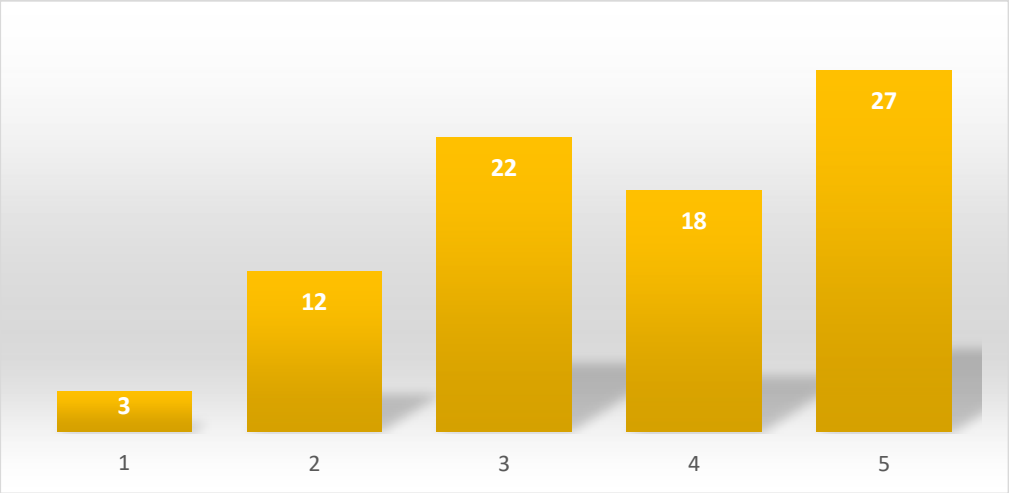
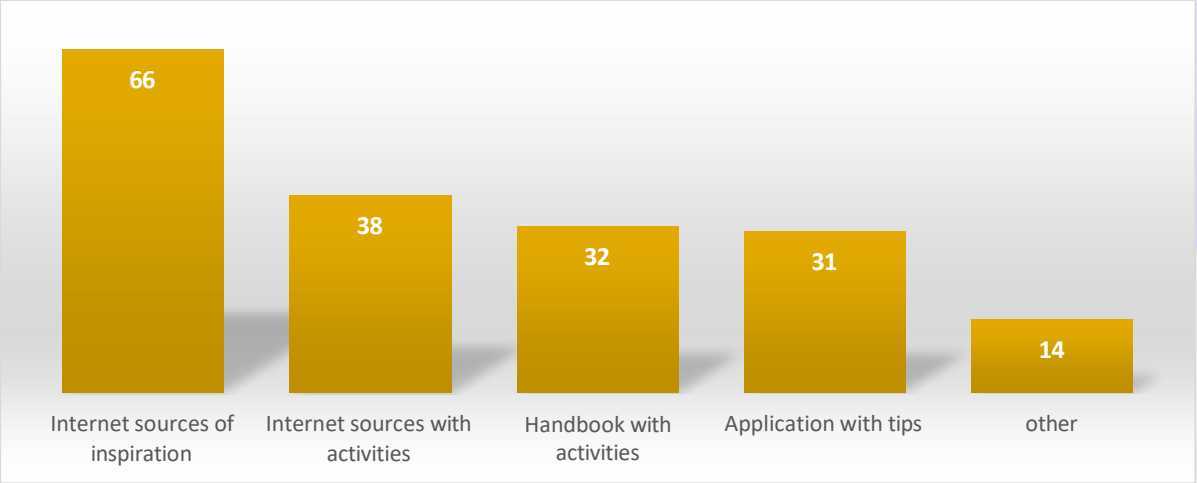
- **Soft skills workshop – expressing opinion, Nonviolent Communication (NVC), assertiveness etc. (average: 3.66)**



The most important topic of the training seems to be the use of communication applications in smartphones and teaching the possibilities of communication on social networks. These are the means which help seniors share their experiences, participate in solving various problems, discuss, etc. without direct contact. It is also important for them to improve their Internet skills in general.

The survey among seniors showed very similar results.

11. What kind of tools do you need while working with seniors? (you can choose more than one answer)



Trainers mostly use internet resources for working with seniors as a target group, especially in Poland and the Czech Republic. Among trainers from Cyprus apps with tips are also very popular.

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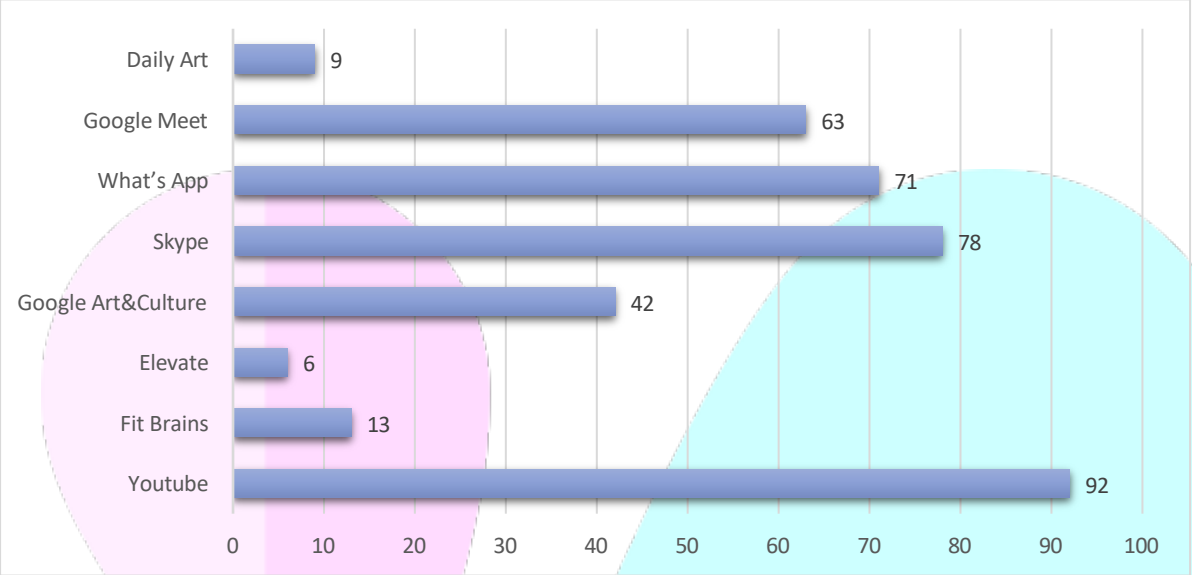
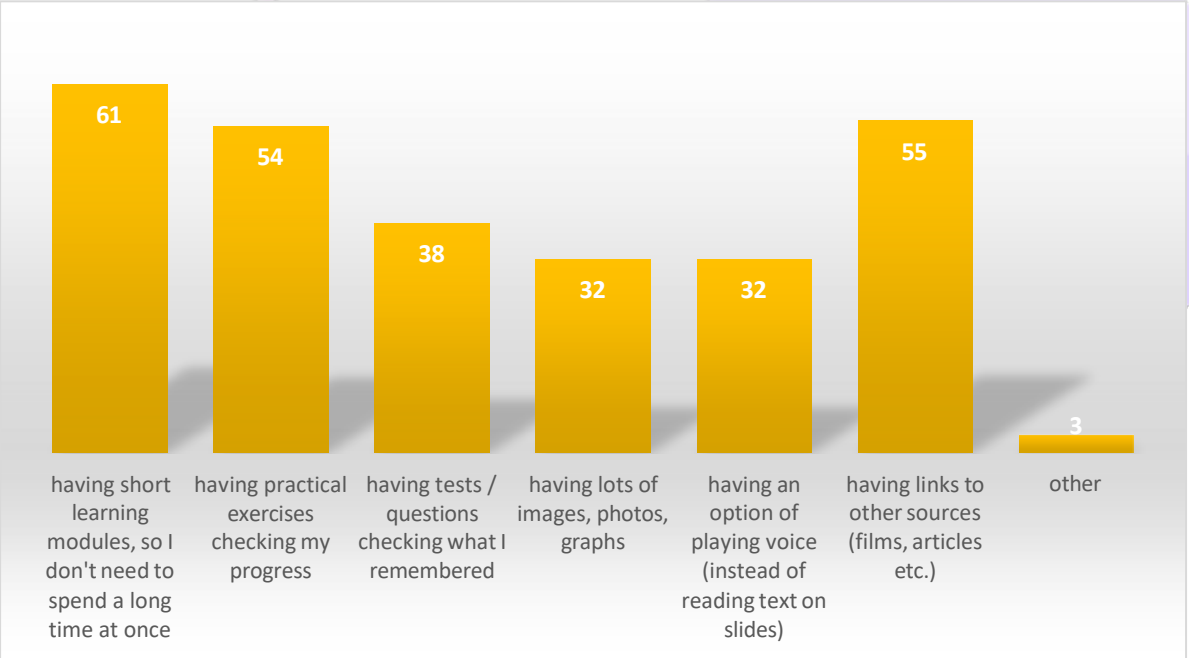
12. What applications/digital tools have you ever heard of? (You can choose more than one answer)



The most known tools are YouTube, Skype and What´s App.

Google Meet is highly recognizable among Czech trainers, Google Art&Culture – in Portugal, Daily Art – in Cyprus.

13. What is important for you when you participate in an e-learning course (choose 3 the most important ones):



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Trainers expressed a special need for short learning modules, links to other sources and practical exercises. For coaches from Cyprus and Portugal, it is equally important to have lots of images, photos and graphs. They are also highly interested in checking their knowledge through tests.

3.3 Conclusion

288 seniors, mostly women have answered to the survey. The group of respondents corresponds very well to the target group of the project, however a small number of men proves that we should undertake special actions in order to encourage them to take part in the project activities and use the project results.

Seniors spend their free time on various activities and 78% of them participated in activities or classes dedicated especially for this group. 84% of seniors have their own computer or share it with a family member and 9 in 10 have access to the Internet. Most seniors find online tools useful for learning and communicating with their peers and welcome the opportunity to participate in computer and smartphone courses. The vast majority of respondents are eager to broaden their knowledge and skills in the fields proposed, however, seniors show different preferences of topics and skills they would like to acquire. The general competences (like computing, online communication, soft skills, brain training) seem to be very interesting to most of them. More detailed topics like poetry, history of art, photography, cinematography, music, dance, handicraft seem to be more dependent on individual interests and hobbies, which is quite understandable.

Therefore the selection of main topics as following step for this project could be rather tricky since it should respect and be based on all needs and preferences. As for creative digital activities, most seniors show interest in using social networking sites, work with digital photographs, shoot videos and educate themselves in this area. But the idea of developing basic and thematic training modules that can be chosen for different groups seems to correspond to the actual needs.

The vast majority prefer either classroom or blended learning – face-to-face meetings with online elements. However, there are some barriers to education for seniors in smaller towns and villages, as the range of educational activities on offer is essentially sporadic. Therefore, it is important that U3As also offer distance learning or directly online courses. While this is not a substitute for face-to-face activities, it can make a significant contribution to the quality and accessibility of educational activities for older people.

118 educators, mostly from cities took part in the second part of the survey. The research shows that

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half of them don’t give regular classes for seniors – we can expect that this is a project-based activity conducted only when their institutions manage to raise funds for it. Educators show interest in acquiring new competences, especially in soft skills and activating seniors to undertake their own initiatives. They believe it is necessary to involve seniors as actively as possible in their field of interest, e.g. through interactive courses. It is important for them to have practical exercises to check the knowledge acquired and to have access to sources of further information expanding the topic. They expect an e-learning course divided into short classes.

For working with seniors as a target group, teachers-lecturers most often use Internet resources. The most used tools are YouTube, Skype, What's App and Google Meet. The preference for face-to-face sessions as a teaching method indicated by the seniors is in line with the educators' responses.

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4. Focus groups results

4.1 Interviewees presentation

The interviewees, their backgrounds, experiences and expertise		
	Number of interviewees	**Professions / experience of participants**
Cyprus	6	6 adult educators working for Emphasys Centre
Czech Republic	5	2 university teachers, 1 teacher, 1 former teacher
Greece	5	4 adult trainers, 1 dance teacher
Poland	6	2 senior educators, 4 city seniors council members
Portugal	5	5 teachers (philosophy and music, yoga, local heritage, thetre, creative writing)

4.2 Topics discussed

Topic 1: **General overview** What is your general view of educational programmes for seniors? Are they needed? Are they tailored for seniors' needs? How has the COVID-19 pandemic changed the situation?
Summary of the discussion: All participants strongly agreed on the importance of the educational programmes for seniors, but many of them also stressed, that seniors' motivation plays a vital role in the whole process – and this is one of the reasons these clasess should bring them new experience and knowledge to be used in their life. Another benefit of the programmes is their social potential, possibility to socialise, chat. There are some courses in digital competences but not so many seniors have participated. Another problem is that seniors forget very quickly their digital skills when they don't practice (most of them don't because they have no motivation/need). The COVID-19 has changed the situation a lot. Some seniors stayed home and it's difficult to attract them again. Most of the seniors are not familiar with online courses and their level of digital skills is low.
Topic 2: **Education themes** What should seniors learn? What do they want to learn? Why? What is the place of arts and culture in educational programmes?

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Summary of the discussion:
The key area seems to be the acquisition of knowledge and especially skills in the use of digital technologies. However, seniors are interested in many other areas. Some of the participants supported that, after their retirement, seniors would like to follow their hobbies, which include arts and culture activities. Some stated they are of enormous relevance, particularly when added to or promoting critical thinking and aesthetic sense, helping to enhance the vision of reality. They also understand that combining theatre and artistic expressions with ICT can be an added value, as they empower seniors in a logic of lifelong learning. On the other hand, there were opinions that culture and art are often pushed away as a topic, we all tend to think that "there are more important things".
The form of the educational activity was also discussed. For example, a combination of online teaching and face-to-face lectures, or only online lectures, outdoor trips and other forms of field education, etc. Online education offers a lot of opportunities, one can learn in small groups, from distant places and search for common interests with those who are far away. There is too much information around, so it would be interesting to share opinions in an online discussion club.

Question 3: Methods of education
What are methods that are currently used to teach seniors? Are they efficient? Why yes or why not? Would you be interested in learning new methods?

Summary of the discussion:
The most popular method is face-to-face learning supported by a virtual classroom, where seniors can access study materials, other resources and activities. Other methods include blended learning (face-to-face mixed with online classes), online lectures (most appreciated by less mobile seniors), frontal education (i.e. a lecture by renowned experts), outdoor education in a form of excursions with experts. Different forms of training are suitable for different types of courses and the composition of the target group. Combining these forms results in achieving educational effectiveness.
There is no perfect method – blended learning lacks this vivid environment and requires a lot of digital skills to participate, which leads to giving up. Computing classes are not always successful, sometimes they're boring. An important barrier is that many seniors still have old phones, they are afraid of smartphones.
However, some methods are rated generally higher than others. For example, interactive dynamics are seen as more effective than lectures. Repetition is better than quick knowledge transfer. With a short training mode, there is a risk that participants will forget what they have learned. Seniors need time to learn – it is important to repeat the same material many times. They also need to learn things that are as practical as possible, that they will really use in the future (i.e. how to receive e-mails, how to make a film on a smartphone etc.). They don't need to make tables in Word, etc.

Of course, teachers would be very happy to learn about other teaching methods. They are open to anything new.

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Question 4: Seniors' educators

What makes a great seniors' educator? Why? Which competences should such educator have? What support is needed for educators (especially in small CSS sector)? What should we take into account while preparing a training programme for them?

Summary of the discussion:

Great seniors' educators:

- Should know the basics of gerontology, primarily social gerontology and psychology of ageing.
- Should provide clear instructions, create presentations adapted to seniors' needs, use simple language, big letters, images, videos.
- Have a great level of patience, are keen to repeat many times the same pieces of information and instructions to their students, speak loudly and slowly.
- Are able to motivate, demonstrate the topic, engage the students in activities, prepare an interesting, interactive and unusual lesson. They use many practical activities instead of only theory. Creativity is also important. If the teacher likes to teach, students like to learn.
- Possess good interpersonal skills, show empathy, friendliness, respects their audience, tailor the courses according to them and their needs. They are good listeners to seniors' needs, approve the dialogue and exchange of thoughts. Seniors can be a great support one for another – a good educator should use this potential of the group.
- Know their groups' particularities. Should be able to notice those who need more attention, support, like hearing or visual aid. An individual approach is needed, a good assessment of participants' ability to learn. It is crucial not to exclude those who need a slower pace.
- Use constant verbal assurance that they will learn in order to give them confidence.
- Keep the balance between a formal and an informal class, making it more informal.
- Should be psychologically resistant, because probably won't be able to make everyone happy – assertiveness is also necessary. Sometimes one needs to find a difficult equilibrium between empathy and setting limits.
- Should remember to take frequent breaks for integration and relaxation.
- Should develop physical activities with the seniors, activities that work on memory, listening skills, balance and concentration.

It is important that seniors have a possibility to be in touch with the educator between classes in order to ask additional questions, get support when they forget some things and get stuck etc.

Question 5: Seniors' needs

What do you think are seniors' educational needs (especially in small cities and countryside)? Can we reach them through arts and culture? What sort of barriers should we take into account?

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Summary of the discussion:

Common educational needs of seniors are:

- Slowing ageing with appropriate study practices
- Memory training (not only through various techniques but through learning itself)
- Keeping up with the trends and the rest of the population
- Maintaining social contact
- Avoiding exclusion, including digital exclusion
- Creating a state of joy and satisfaction
- Satisfaction with the learning progress

However, seniors' needs vary based on their preferences and lifestyle. Yet, all of them must develop digital skills even at a basic level since our daily life and society have become as much digital as possible and this phenomenon is not going to stop soon.

Meeting the common needs listed above can be achieved through education in a variety of areas and topics, not excluding culture and the arts. In the case of arts and culture, learning outside the classroom, e.g. in galleries, museums, theatres, concert halls, cultural and historical sites, etc., is particularly suitable. On the other hand, art and culture may be more beneficial for seniors in villages or the countryside, where people have fewer opportunities to participate in cultural events.

Regarding barriers, the use of technology is still a challenge for many seniors. Participants also mentioned the distance from the place of courses, the financial restriction to attend the course, the educational level of the participants and a possible deterrent behaviour of the other family members.

Question 6: Seniortube

We're planning to create a seniortube – an international web portal for seniors within the project. What do you think it should contain? What should we think about when designing it?

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Summary of the discussion:

For some participants, the idea seems very nice or even excellent. They hope it will be a tool to exchange experiences and promote fun among seniors and, if possible, meet their needs and different realities, making resources accessible to all. For others it was difficult to answer, they would need more information. They could not imagine the strategy, structure, or practical implementation. The content seemed to them very vague and not well specified.

The educators proposed a multilingual tube with different subjects for seniors to choose. Big fonts, icons and oral technical support are required while the most important aspect seems to be easy use. According to educators, seniors must be able to easily find instructions and the entrance procedure must not be complicated with accounts or registrations. The language should be simple. If the tube includes a lot of short and interactive videos, useful links, forums and information material, it would certainly find its supporters. Videos about seniors with passion who could inspire others would also be a great idea. Seniors could present their handicrafts, drawings, paintings etc. And it could certainly be used in education. In any case, it would also help to increase the possibilities of seniors to communicate with each other.

Linguistic 'accessibility' could be a potential problem for the portal if the material is not translated into national languages. Not all seniors are fluent in English.

Question 7: Surprising results

Question of your choice: Choose at least one result of the online survey among seniors and/or educators that surprised you and ask your interviewees what they think about it, why respondents answered this way.

Summary of the discussion:

Something which is maybe not so surprising but it should be stressed how much this problem persists is the fact that it is very difficult to attract men seniors. How can we change it?
The most important thing is the reason to act, motivation. Seniors need to have a purpose of going out. It's easier to attract younger seniors because they've already "tasted" possibilities they have

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but the elder ones (over 70) "got stuck in the same place and see no reason to change their lives, to become open to new opportunities". The purpose should be useful! The feeling of being needed is very important. For example, many seniors are eager to participate in Christmas help actions – they feel they do something useful.
In Czechia, the most surprising result was 100% access to the Internet among seniors. The systematic education in digital technologies for about 10 years has meant that seniors can no longer imagine their lives without these technologies and the Internet.
In Greece survey showed that whereas 60% of seniors admitted the fact they do have the opportunity to participate in activities organized for their age group locally, only 40% of them has actually joined such activities. One reason could be the financial barriers or the lack of digital equipment while another reason could be the family barriers, either real ones like taking care of children or because their family does not allow them or mocks them. The structure of the courses can be a reason too, maybe courses are not properly tailored to senior's needs or seniors are not able to fully understand how they will be benefited from this procedure, also, the formal phrasing of courses deprive joy and make seniors feel insecure. Finally, practical barriers, like the late hours or long distances or seniors' health play an important role too.

4.3 Conclusions

The Focus group interview shows what should be taken into account in the process of designing the training programme, e-learning course and web portal. Strengthening interpersonal skills of educators for working with seniors (their patience, attentiveness, assertiveness, ability to create motivation for learning, being active etc.) seems to be one of the key factors. It is also important that in small communities seniors who have special interests are often limited – creating links between different places and people is an interesting possibility for personal development, which should be exploited within the project.

Education for seniors still offers only a small number of activities aimed at the seniors' creativity. The majority of the courses in the culture and arts area tend to focus on history and passive participation in cultural and artistic events. We would like to offer courses focused on more active activities.The focus group sessions provided detailed information for both target groups. We have collected useful tips and advice on how a good educator for seniors should be and what seniortube should involve. Sharing what is done by other people in an interactive, playful way and a logic of knowledge exchange is very well received by teachers and certainly by seniors.

In addition, seniors shared their preferences with us in regards to the topics they are interested in and they showed their enthusiasm for future workshops of the CEDAC project. Meeting needs and expectations, valuing knowledge and expertise through culture and arts will surely be a winning bet.

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