

eduTrends

LIFELONG LEARNING



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Foreword

The future of education is not coming; it is unfolding before us. The imperative for innovation in educational models has become more acute over the decades, thanks to global disruptions such as the Fourth Industrial Revolution, fueled by the rapid pace of technological developments, demographic changes due to greater life expectancy, and lower fertility rates, an increasingly globalized world, and the COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerated the pace of change.

It is becoming increasingly apparent that education is no longer just a phase in our lives, something we do in our youth before progressing into work and adulthood. Learning begins the day we are born and continues until our last breath. Education is a continuum, so we should not separate it into isolated stages. We must rethink education as a path forward and lifelong learning as a universal public good.

Recognizing the need for a new paradigm in shaping the future of higher education, Tec de Monterrey established the Institute for the Future of Education (IFE) in 2020. It aims to create the future of education to improve the lives of millions worldwide. How are we going to achieve this ambitious dream? By looking for disruptive solutions, aligning with each other under a lifelong learning approach, and working with institutional leaders and policymakers to drive change across the sector.

The Edu Trends Report is part of our efforts to contribute to the global knowledge base on the future of education. To build the future of education, we need to change our assumptions about education's purpose and review and consider expanding the roles of universities.

This report takes us on a journey through the history of lifelong learning, its origins, revisions, and transformations over several decades. To know where we are going, we must understand our past. In the following pages, we explain how lifelong learning became today's trend, hoping to open our perspective to its true potential. Beyond the labor market, lifelong learning affects all human experiences, hence its importance for the planet's future.



MICHAEL FUNG
Executive Director, Institute for
the Future of Education

Nobody ignores everything,
Nobody knows everything.
That's why we always learn.

– Paulo Freire



I begin this message with the words of the Brazilian philosopher and educator Paulo Freire, not only because they fit the topic that we analyze in the following pages like a glove but also because they serve as a humble reminder that learning is a process that never ends, that all people are lifelong learners.

The first draft of this report emerged in 2019, in that pre-pandemic world that today seems far away when we were unaware of the crucial experience about to envelop humanity. The worst months of the COVID-19 pandemic put this report into hibernation, as there were many other priorities; however, the topic has always been on my mind (and I think it always will be).

When I picked up the project and restarted my research reading, it was bittersweet to realize how much I did not know about the history of lifelong learning. Authoring this report has been simultaneously a fascinating and uncomfortable process because I realized that I knew only a tiny part of this concept with that fashionable name we have heard frequently lately: lifelong learning. During this time, I

learned a lot and unlearned even more. Four years after that first draft, this report presents the result of that intermittent learning/unlearning process.

Peter Jarvis tells us that learning is a social necessity; humans learn to be and exist in the world. Only recently, perhaps due to the avalanche of information facilitated by technology, humanity has revalued the simplicity of daily life and its permanent lessons. The teachings of life, the school of life, have reappeared with great force. Today, more than ever, after pandemic experiences since 2020, we need to relearn everything. That is the relevance of the trend that we hope to explicate in this report. The following pages aim to demonstrate that lifelong learning is much more than a buzzword.



KARINA FUERTE
Editor-in-Chief, Observatory
of the Institute for the Future
of Education

INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, lifelong learning, the global educational paradigm, is so in vogue today that it has transcended the educational field and has become an imperative for anyone who wants to “stay relevant” in the workplace.

What we understand today as lifelong learning lies in the current discourse that tells us that university education is no longer enough and that as a result of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (a term coined by Klaus Schwab, founder and President of the World Economic Forum, to describe this time when new technologies blur the physical, digital and biological limits of our lives) the outlook within the labor market has become increasingly uncertain. We must continuously renew to keep up with its demands.

In addition, life expectancy is increasing in most countries; we live longer than our ancestors; thus, our working lives, training, and updating will extend. In this context, the renewed boom of lifelong learning makes sense. The Google search engine yields 285 million results for the phrase “lifelong learning” and another 47.5 million for “permanent learning,” a synonym. These numbers increase every day.

However, what exactly do we mean when discussing “lifelong learning?” Why did it arise? Let us analyze the origins of the concept. We find that its description in current educational policies has little to do with the original humanistic and holistic approach. This report aims to recount the historical evolution of the concept and return to that holistic facet, which is less explored in the literature of our time. Thus, the FIRST PART of this report reviews the history and evolution of lifelong learning, from its origins to the present, and the role of UNESCO in its development, focusing on two foundational reports: the Faure Report and the Delors Report. This historical review rests on the excellent research work of Dr. Maren Elfert, which culminated in the book UNESCO’s Utopia of Lifelong Learning—An Intellectual History (Routledge, 2018).

Next, we delve (guided by Peter Jarvis) into the relevance of social context in learning (how and why we learn) and analyze how globalization impacts learning and the evolution of lifelong learning. To conclude the FIRST PART, we offer our vision of the three dimensions of lifelong learning and highlight two critical opportunities opening: the emergence of the World Classroom, inaugurated by virtual communication platforms decades ago booming worldwide during the pandemic, and the longevity revolution, in

which the demographic changes experienced by humanity reveal their dramatic challenges and drive us to recognize, perhaps more than ever, the fundamental roles of active aging and learning throughout life and their potential for social benefits.

What we understand today as *lifelong learning* lies in the current discourse that tells us that university education is no longer enough.

The SECOND PART of this report addresses the need, already noted a few paragraphs above, to clarify the ambiguity generated by the multiple terms to describe Lifelong Learning and the key concepts to understand it. We hope that the Critical Glossary of Lifelong Learning Terms will help.

We dedicate PART THREE to those world universities and institutions that have launched inclusive initiatives related to age to respond to the demographic changes reviewed at the end of PART ONE. The 2023 Directory of Age-Inclusive Universities is a non-exhaustive but representative and widely reported list of the holistic and humanistic approaches we want to highlight throughout this document.

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- 1 Schwab, K. (2016, January 14). The Fourth Industrial Revolution: what it means, how to respond. Accessed October 2018, from World Economic Forum: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/01/the-fourth-industrial-revolution-what-it-means-and-how-to-respond/>
 - 2 As of the date of preparation of this report

Part I

LIFELONG LEARNING





Lifelong Learning

01 TWO PERSPECTIVES: HUMANIST AND INSTRUMENTAL

1.1 A PAST OF DIVERGENCES

→ THE FOUNDING OF UNESCO

To understand how the concept of Lifelong Learning arose, we must return to the origins of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) since it laid the foundations for the concept and made it famous worldwide, shaping global politics.

Maren Elfert

This review is guided by the work of Maren Elfert, embodied in the book UNESCO's Utopia of Lifelong Learning: An Intellectual History.³ For more than a decade, Dr. Elfert was on the professional staff of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) and is currently a professor at King's College London, where she teaches courses on global governance of education, social justice, sociology of education, adult education, and work and learning.

The origins of UNESCO go back to 1942 when, in the middle of the Second World War, the Allied countries met to create a plan to reestablish their educational systems, planning its implementation once the war ended. Later, in 1945, representatives of 44 countries met in London at the United Nations Conference for the Establishment of an Educational and Cultural Organization (ECO/CONF), the predecessor of UNESCO.

The Purpose of UNESCO

At its founding, UNESCO stated its purpose:

Contribute to peace and security by strengthening, through education, science, and culture, collaboration among nations to ensure universal respect for justice, the law, human rights, and fundamental freedoms that, without distinction of race, sex, language, or religion, the Charter of the United Nations recognizes for all the peoples of the world⁴

Since its inception, a unifying vision has prevailed in the organization, emphasizing equality, mutual respect, solidarity, and human dignity over ignorance, prejudice, and inequality.

³ Elfert, M. (2018). UNESCO's utopia of lifelong learning: an intellectual history. Routledge. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000247753>

⁴ UNESCO Constitution, n.d., article 1 <https://www.unesco.org/es/legal-affairs/constitution>



Recognizing the war context is essential to understanding the origins of lifelong learning and its evolution. Paul Lengrand, one of the first theorists on the subject, points out that this context influenced UNESCO's straightforward humanist approach. This humanism highlighted the importance of education (seen "as a universal human right," and therefore present throughout life)⁵ in the creation of an anti-war culture: "Since wars are born in the minds of human beings, it is in the minds of human beings that the bulwarks of peace must be erected."

Universalism, a risk

*Maren Elfert warns that the humanist aspiration of unity in diversity entails the significant risk that "in the name of unity, certain norms are proclaimed as universal and imposed on other countries with detrimental effects."*⁶

→ UNESCO'S UTOPIAN HUMANISM (1960-1970)

Influenced by Enlightenment thought, UNESCO initially emphasized education's "intrinsic" value. This humanism rested on the belief that it is possible to achieve peace and progress if humans use their rational capacity to their full extent.

One of the organization's founders, the French philosopher Jacques Maritain, pointed out that education's fundamental purpose is developing the human person, "making the human truly human."⁷

According to Elfert, this enlightened concept of dignity and human potential is one of the pillars of UNESCO's traditional humanism.

For the organization's pioneers, lifelong learning "represented a humanistic and emancipatory approach that aimed to bring out the full potential of human beings and enable them to shape their societies toward greater democratization and social justice."⁸ The vision prevailed in the postwar years, mainly in the sixties and seventies.

This vision, which was also known as the "French touch," marked an important milestone in the history of what we know today as lifelong learning by bringing to the forefront permanent education, a term highlighted in the first of the emblematic publications of UNESCO, the Faure Report, of 1972.

The French touch

French thought, culture, and politics greatly influenced UNESCO, not only because its headquarters were, and continue to be, in Paris but also because, after the war, many French philosophers and intellectuals joined it.

Faure and Delors reports

Of the numerous reports on education that UNESCO has published, two were vital in the history of this organization and foundational in the literature on lifelong learning (essential, therefore, to understand the history, evolution, and rise of the concept as we understand it today): Learning to Be (also known as the Faure Report), 1972, and Learning: The Treasure Within (known as the Delors Report), 1996.

5 Elfert, 2018, p. 1

6 Elfert, 2018, p. 24

7 Maritain cited in Elfert, 2018, p. 4

8 Elfert, 2018, p. 1

→ THE FAURE REPORT (LEARNING TO BE)

The late 1960s had been turbulent, with social movements and uprisings in different parts of the world: demonstrations against the Vietnam War; African American movements and gay rights movement protests in the United States; the Chinese Cultural Revolution; the movement known as “May 1968” in France; the student demonstrations and the massacre of Tlatelolco, in Mexico; and the counterculture and hippie movements, to name just a few. By the 1970s, the world was at a difficult crossroads, and many sectors of society questioned the existing order.

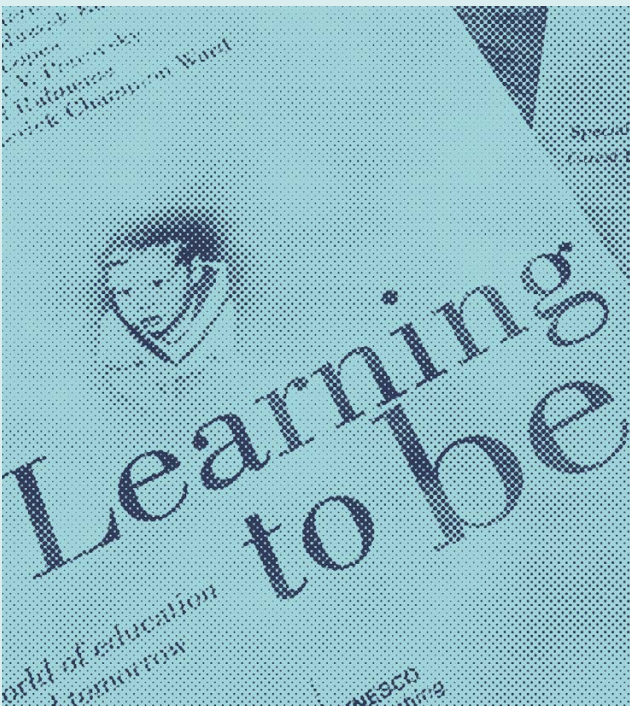
In this context, the Learning to Be Report (better known as the Faure Report) emerged, marking a watershed in the history of lifelong learning, giving it a political-philosophical character that “linked educational ideas with the general development of society and equality and democracy as a social and political system”⁹ (to the extent that today it can be read as a “utopian vision of how the world could have been if it had not fallen under the total hegemony of the market”).¹⁰

Critical network

*Academics like Paulo Freire, Ivan Illich, Paul Goodman, and Everett Reimer formed a network of people with a critical attitude toward education. Books such as Illich’s *Deschooling Society* (1971), Reimer’s *The School Is Dead* (1971), and Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) were part of the primary literature of the Faure Report.*

With the Faure Report, UNESCO proclaimed permanent education as the “new educational teacher concept” to be applied worldwide, including in developed and developing countries.¹¹ According to Elfert, the Report catalyzed academia’s commitment to this concept.

The report called for a “*learning society*” derived from the Greek polis. The concept of the polis or city, with its “immense educational potential,”¹² underlined the idea that all sectors of society should contribute to citizens’ learning. Following ancient Greek principles, it referenced the notion of paideia, which the ancient Greeks used to denote not only the transmission of skills and knowledge but also wisdom, character building, and “soul education”¹³ to train the ideal citizen. Paideia was a process that accompanied citizens throughout their lives. The Faure Report stated that humans never stop learning, that we continuously learn, and that we need it “to survive.”¹⁴ Therefore, their idea of a learning society did not focus on schooling but rather on a process that ran through the life of each individual that would lead them to learn to be “a complete human being,” an “agent of change and development,” a “promoter of democracy” and a “citizen of the world.”¹⁵



- 9 Elfert, 2018, p. 114
- 10 Elfert, 2018, p. 112
- 11 Faure et al., 1972, p. 182
- 12 Faure et al., p. 162
- 13 Elfert, p. 114
- 14 Faure et al., p. 158
- 15 Faure et al., p. 158

Through these principles, the Faure Report sought to emphasize the ethical purpose of education as opposed to the technical purpose. Their proposal for a learning society sought -according to Elfert- to challenge the traditional educational system, in particular the school system: “[The] old idea that school is the only valid education, and that learning time is limited to the traditional school age [...] is fundamentally unfair.”¹⁶

The idea of a permanent education reflected the sentiment of the time to raise awareness that education can be used to oppress; hence, the Report adopted a critical stance toward the educational system. *Éducation permanente* sought instead to open and broaden the scope of education to all citizens, inside or outside of school (for example, it argued that the educational system should be less elitist since it excluded “hundreds of millions of illiterates” and young people who had dropped out of school).¹⁷

The arrival of these ideas meant the end of what Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educator and philosopher, called the “banking model” of education, in which the teacher/authority “deposits” knowledge in the passive and submissive student.¹⁸ Elfert points out that the Faure Report represented a kind of humanist manifesto, with a utopian vision of a “new society,” which at the same time reflected the “existential” crisis of the 1960s and 1970s because, although after the post-war period, the societies enjoyed a stage of economic development, faith in progress slowly dissipated, giving way to a sense of imminent crisis. The Faure Report identified the latter not only as an educational crisis but also as a crisis of authority and international cooperation.¹⁹

→ THE HUMAN CAPITAL THEORY

UNESCO became recognized as the international organization that had made “the most important philosophical and theoretical contributions” to lifelong learning.²⁰ However, in a world immersed in the Cold War, it was simultaneously debated in educational circles at a global level. In the discussions, the idea of literacy at the service of economic development and the theory of human capital gained popularity.



Such a political climate, characterized by ideological polarization between the United States and the Soviet Union, triggered an actual technological race between both countries, which led to increased investment in education in Western countries. Economic growth became an “obsession”²¹ for the United States during those years. This emphasis on development brought to the forefront the concept of human capital, which emerged with the studies of Theodore Schultz and Gary Becker, economists who advocated education as an essential investment to achieve economic growth under the logic that “the value of human beings in the labor market would be enhanced by investment in the form of education and training.”²² This logic behind the theory of human capital gained ground in the political and economic spheres thanks to its “two faces,” i.e., on the one hand, it sought to expand public education and achieve greater equality of opportunities, and, on the other, it used the human being as an object of investment for economic growth.

The strongest critics of human capital theory at UNESCO argued that “without the ‘humanist’ counterbalance, human capital theory was prone to be absorbed by the neoliberal agenda because its purely economic approach considered human beings as factors of production.”²³

Their fears were founded.

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- 16 Elfert, 2018, p. 114
 - 17 Elfert, 2018, p. 112
 - 18 Faure et al., 1972, p. 182
 - 19 Faure et al., p. 162
 - 20 Elfert, p. 114
 - 21 Faure et al., p. 158
 - 22 Faure et al., p. 158
 - 23 Faure et al., p. 158

→ UNESCO'S DECLINE

UNESCO was financially dependent on other organizations –such as the World Bank– which at that time demonstrated that they were not willing to finance educational programs that had a vision of the world very different from theirs.²⁴ As we have seen, UNESCO's vision was strongly influenced by French idealist traditions. Meanwhile, the new economic growth paradigm, represented by human capital theory, influenced the US-backed organizations. This is how UNESCO gradually lost power, and ideas such as *éducation permanente*, representing a democratic worldview and philosophy, declined.

Meanwhile, the theory of human capital, which was strictly an economic paradigm promoted by American economists, gained ground. International organizations such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the World Bank itself entered as "new players" in the competition to become world references in the field of Education. These organizations played an essential role in bringing lifelong learning to the popularity that – with different visions and meanings – it has today..

→ THE JANNE AND CERI REPORTS

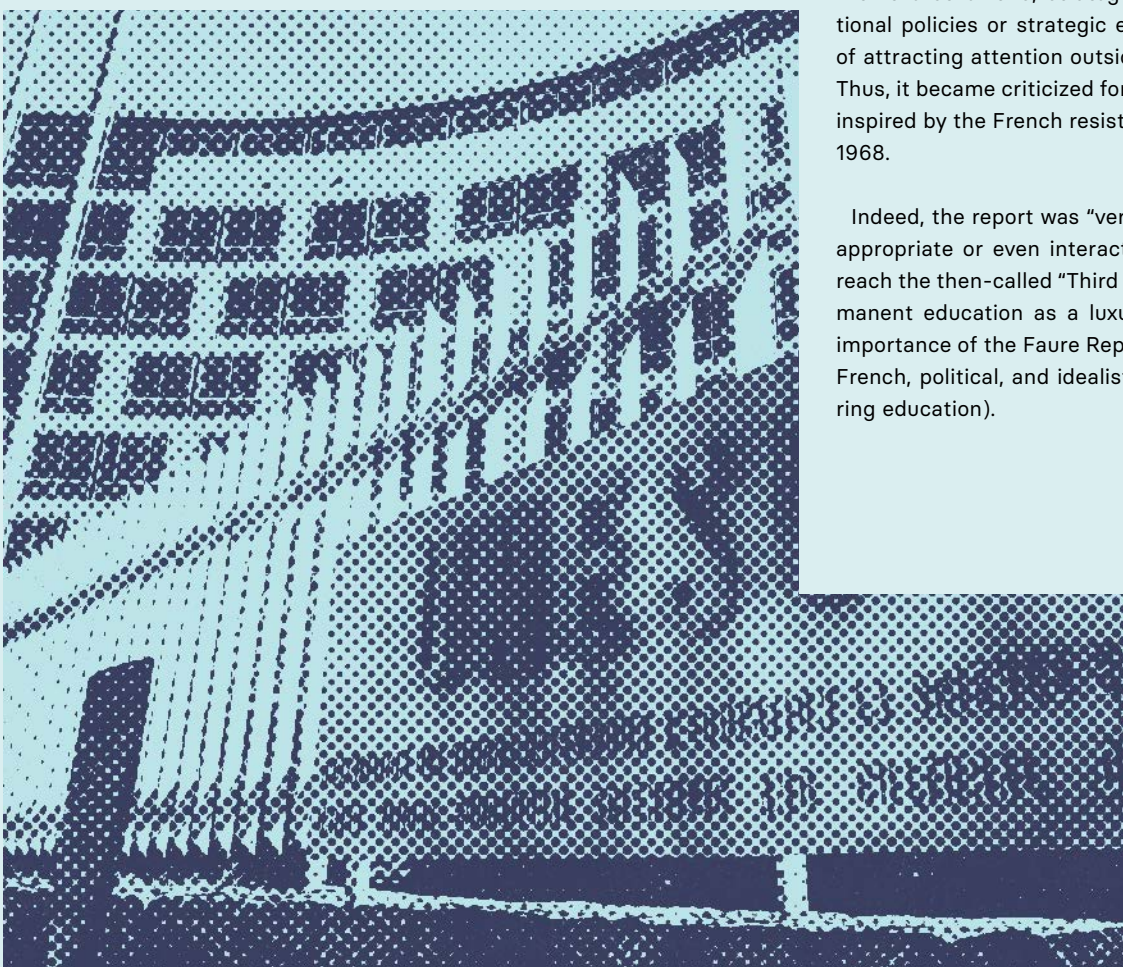
As a reaction to the Faure Report, in 1973, the European Commission launched the report For a Community Policy on Education, also known as the Janne Report, which included the term "permanent education." In the same year, the OECD Center for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) published a report on recurrent education (a similar term to *éducation permanente*), which was used by both the OECD and the International Labor Organization (ILO). It had great diffusion between the end of the sixties and the end of the eighties.²⁵ Elfert points out that the proposal had a strong utilitarian focus; however, the report itself defined the concept of recurrent education with a different nuance:

...a comprehensive educational strategy for all post-compulsory or post-basic education, whose essential characteristic is regularly distributing education over the individual's life, alternating with other activities, mainly work, leisure, and retirement.²⁶

→ CRITICISM OF THE FAURE REPORT

Comparing the three reports - the Faure, the European Commission, and the CERI/OECD - Elfert notes that, although the first was a long and bold philosophical reflection and raised important questions about the future challenges of education, it lacked, in comparison with the other two, strategies that could result in effective educational policies or strategic educational planning documents capable of attracting attention outside of intellectual and educational circles. Thus, it became criticized for its idealistic and utopian content closely inspired by the French resistance and the student movements of May 1968.

Indeed, the report was "very French," and many countries could not appropriate or even interact with it. Its pages, for example, did not reach the then-called "Third World," whose countries "considered permanent education as a luxury of the developed world."²⁷ Thus, the importance of the Faure Report remained at a "rhetorical level"²⁸ (less French, political, and idealistic was the CERI/OECD version of recurring education).



24 Elfert, 2018, p. 101

25 Elfert, 2018, p. 133

26 CERI cited in Elfert., 2018, p. 133

27 Rubenson cited in Elfert, 2018, p. 135

28 Cropley in interview with Elfert

“[The] old idea that school is the only valid education, and that learning time is limited to the traditional school age [...] is fundamentally unfair.”

→ RELEVANCE AND PERMANENCE OF THE FAURE REPORT

Despite its weaknesses, the Faure Report is a pivotal document in the history of lifelong learning. Peter Jarvis claims it is “certainly the most influential book on adult education of its period.” Carlos Alberto Torres, Director of the Paulo Freire Institute at the University of California Los Angeles, describes it as “the humanist educational manifesto of the 20th century.”²⁹

Its pages inspired an entire research program on education throughout life and gave rise to the creation of the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE), which, between 1972 and 1979, organized 25 meetings and conferences exclusively on the subject, and finally, in 2006, it became the current UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL).³⁰

All this shows the strong influence that the report had on the educational programs created after its publication.

→ UNESCO VS. OCDE AND THE WORLD BANK

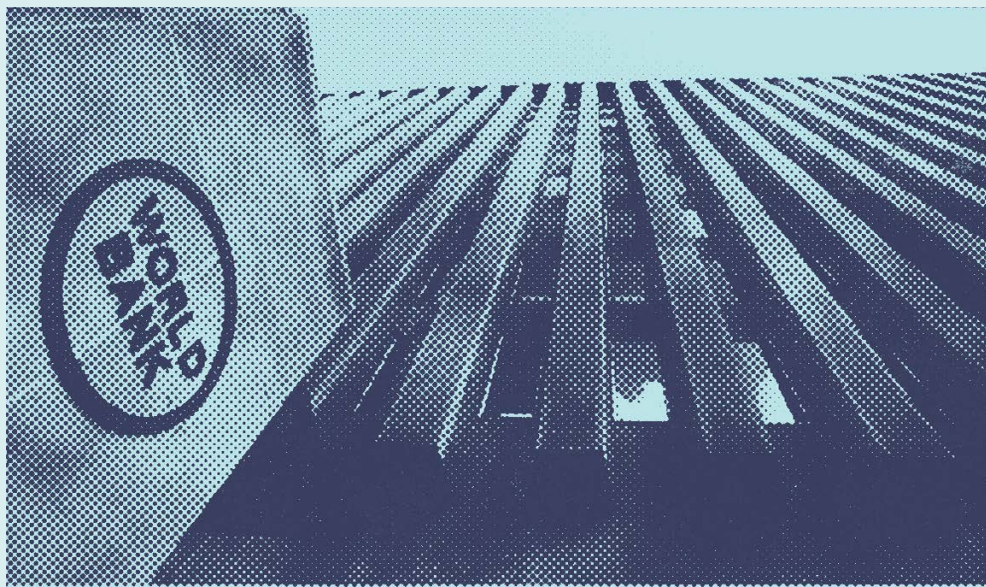
When UNESCO, which for many years had been a point of reference for philosophers, intellectuals, and all kinds of people interested in education, faced the new approaches of organizations such as the OECD and the World Bank, a “rivalry” began among international agencies and the transmission of authority from the “old world” to the “new world.” As a concession by the British and Americans, UNESCO remained in France, but over the next few decades, “the center of power [was] shifting across the Atlantic.”³²

The second half of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s were difficult years worldwide due to a severe economic recession that affected many of the OECD nations. For UNESCO, this crisis culminated in 1984 with the withdrawal of the United States from membership, followed by the United Kingdom and Singapore in 1985. Consequently, UNESCO’s alliance with the World Bank also ended in 1986, whereby the first provided analysis of educational issues and the second, funds.

The absence of its main contributors was a devastating blow for the organization,³³ making it clear that it had lost the race and had been surpassed by the multilateral organizations, which established themselves as leaders in developing educational policies worldwide.

Shifts in power dynamics

*In 1973, UNESCO was still a reference point for the OECD and the World Bank; however, the power dynamic changed dramatically. Furthermore, today, the OECD has become the most influential organization in defining policies in the West, and the World Bank has become the most significant educational trainer in the developing world.*³⁴



29 Elfert, 2018, p. 143

30 PTo learn more about the history of the UIL visit: <https://uil.unesco.org/es/unesco-instituto/historia>

31 Elfert, 2018, p. 142

32 Elfert, 2018, p. 142

33 Elfert, 2018, p. 157

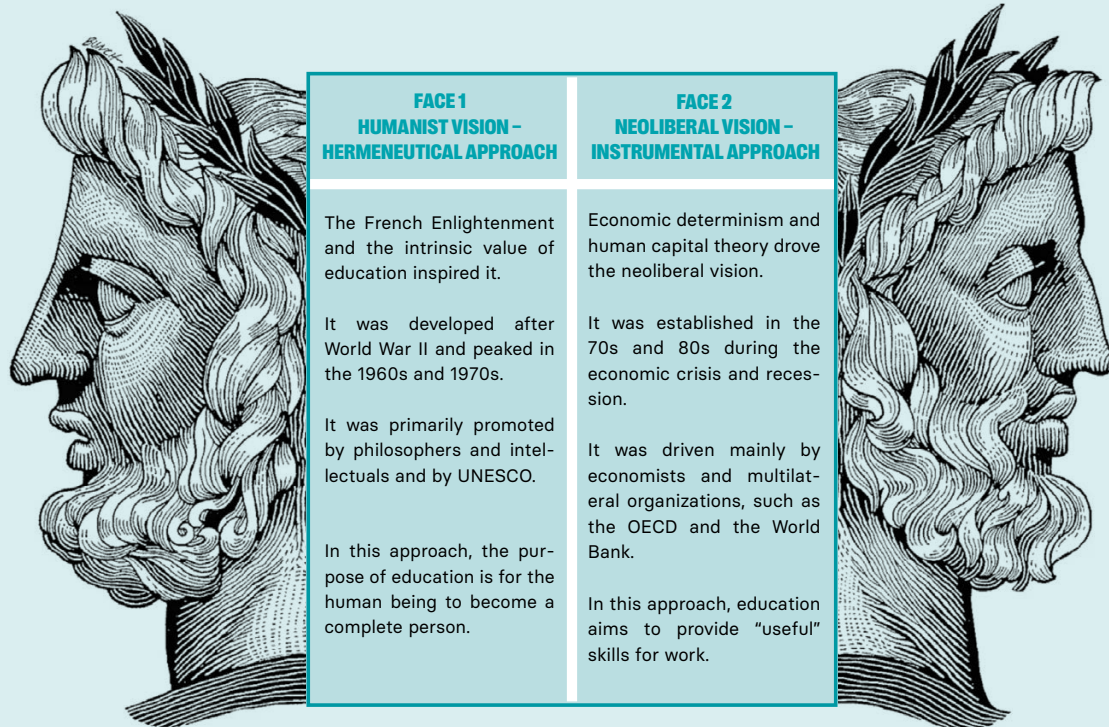
34 Elfert, p. 134

1.2 COEXISTENCE

→ TWO-FACED JANUS

Janus represents how the two main visions of lifelong learning, wildly divergent from each other, became consolidated: the humanist vision (hermeneutic approach) promoted by the philosophers and intellectuals of UNESCO and the neoliberal vision (instrumental approach), supported by economists from the OECD and the World Bank.

According to an image proposed by Kjell Rubenson,³⁵ these antagonistic approaches can be represented as the two faces of the god Janus to understand how these two ontologies can be present in the same concept.



Thanks to the coexistence of these two divergent facets, the concept of education throughout life was welcomed by governments, international organizations, and educators around the world since the idea that people should always learn is attractive to everyone: those who support the liberal-capitalist ideology with a focus more on individualism and those who identify with the social democratic worldview and its emphasis on the responsible citizen.³⁶

Regardless of approach, this type of education was seen everywhere as a means of equipping human beings for the impending changes to be brought in the 21st century. Today, we witness that their prognosis was correct.

→ THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON EDUCATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Faced with the challenges of the new millennium, UNESCO produced the idea of initiating a series of “debates on education for the 21st century,” seeking that they could contribute to a new visibility of the organization and “strengthen its intellectual function.”³⁷

Thus, in November 1989, during a symposium on education in the new century, delegates recommended the establishment of a new commission on the future of education, and finally, in January 1993, the International Commission on Education for the New XXI Century was officially born, led by Jacques Delors, a French politician who had served as President of the European Commission since 1985.

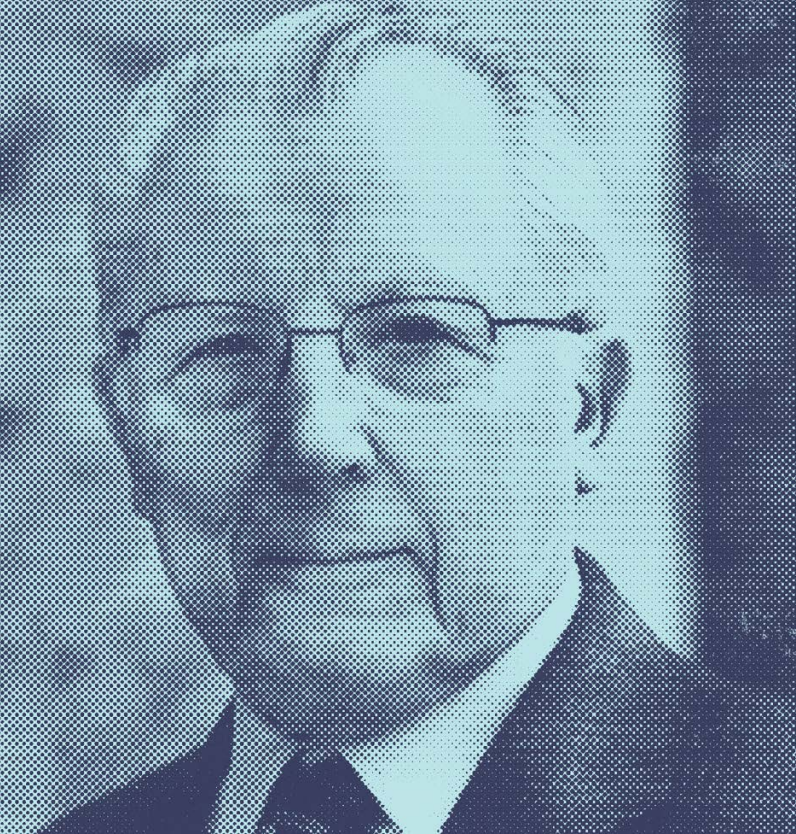
Dignity and human potential

The Enlightenment concept of dignity and human potential, which, according to Maren Elfert, constitutes one of the pillars of UNESCO's traditional humanism and was predominant in the post-war years, mainly the 1960s and 1970s, made a brief comeback in the late 1990s after the publication of the Delors Report, which tried to rescue the holistic approach promoted by the organization.

³⁵ Rubenson cited in Elfert, 2018, p. 2

³⁶ Elfert, 2018, p. 139

³⁷ Elfert, 2018, p. 164



Recovering the transforming spirit

*Substituting the term “Formation permanente” for “Éducation tout au long de la vie” (recovering the word éducation with the transforming spirit it had in the Faure Report) was a proposal “destined to combine tradition with modernity,”⁴⁵ that is, a return to the principles of the 1972 utopian humanism with a touch of new age modernity from UNESCO, led by Delors and their report *Learning: The Treasure Within* (1996).*

For UNESCO, the new concept *éducation tout au long de la vie* (which in English was translated as lifelong learning) reintroduced the notion of an “educational continuum, coextensive with life and expanded to encompass the whole society.”⁴⁶ With this, the Delors Commission reiterated the utopian meaning that education had had throughout life in the 1970s, with an approach centered on what in English is called “learning” and marking a critical change of paradigm in the concept of teaching and the evolution of the term, which one day would end up becoming what we call “lifelong learning” today.

From education to learning

*The most interesting thing about the evolution of terms around lifelong learning is how the word learning replaced education. Although the importance of the semantic difference between the two terms is frequently pointed out in academic circles, Elfert points out that few people have paid attention to the fact that the French version of the Delors Report used the term education while the English translation replaced the term with learning. The reason for this inconsistency, Elfert argues, lies in the absence of an equivalent word in French for learning (in that language, the word *apprentissage* is more related to the old pedagogical concept of formation).⁴⁷*

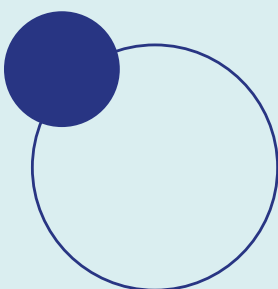
According to Elfert, the continuous use of the term “learning” during the Declaration of the Second International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA II), organized by UNESCO in 1960, marked the beginning of what Biesta calls the “learnification” of education, which was nothing more than a position of resistance to the traditional, hierarchal, authoritarian forms of education, centered on the teacher.⁴⁸

→ DELORS REPORT (LEARNING: THE TREASURE WITHIN)

Jacques Delors had always been a promoter of *éducation permanente* and believed that “education was one of the essential priorities of society,” revealing his sympathy with the universal humanist vision of UNESCO and its approach of “unity in diversity.”³⁹

It is not surprising, then, that under his chairmanship, the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century (known as the Delors Commission) returned to UNESCO’s founding principles, the revival of which was captured in a new Report in 1996, *Learning: The Treasure Within*,⁴⁰ which became known as the Delors Report.

Although similar in many aspects to the Faure Report, the Delors Commission renounced the term *Éducation permanente*, which by the end of the 1970s had been replaced by *Formation permanente*, “more functional”⁴¹ and devoid of the transformative meaning it originally had. In return, the Delors Report introduced the concept of *éducation tout au long de la vie* (lifelong education), intending to recover the “holistic meaning”⁴² and add the idea that learning needed to be seen as a process that provided equal opportunities to all citizens in “response to a new economic demand.”^{43 44}



38 Elfert, 2018, p. 167

39 Elfert, 2018, p. 171

40 Delors, J. (1996). *Learning: The Treasure Within*. UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000109590>

41 Elfert, 2018, p. 85

42 Elfert, 2018, p. 176

43 Elfert, 2018, p. 176

44 According to Ravindra Dave (quoted by Elfert, p.86), the permanent term was replaced by throughout life because UNESCO wanted to emphasize that education should be open to all ages and formative stages, and be conceived as a continuous process, not finite.

45 Carneiro cited in Elfert, 2018, p. 177

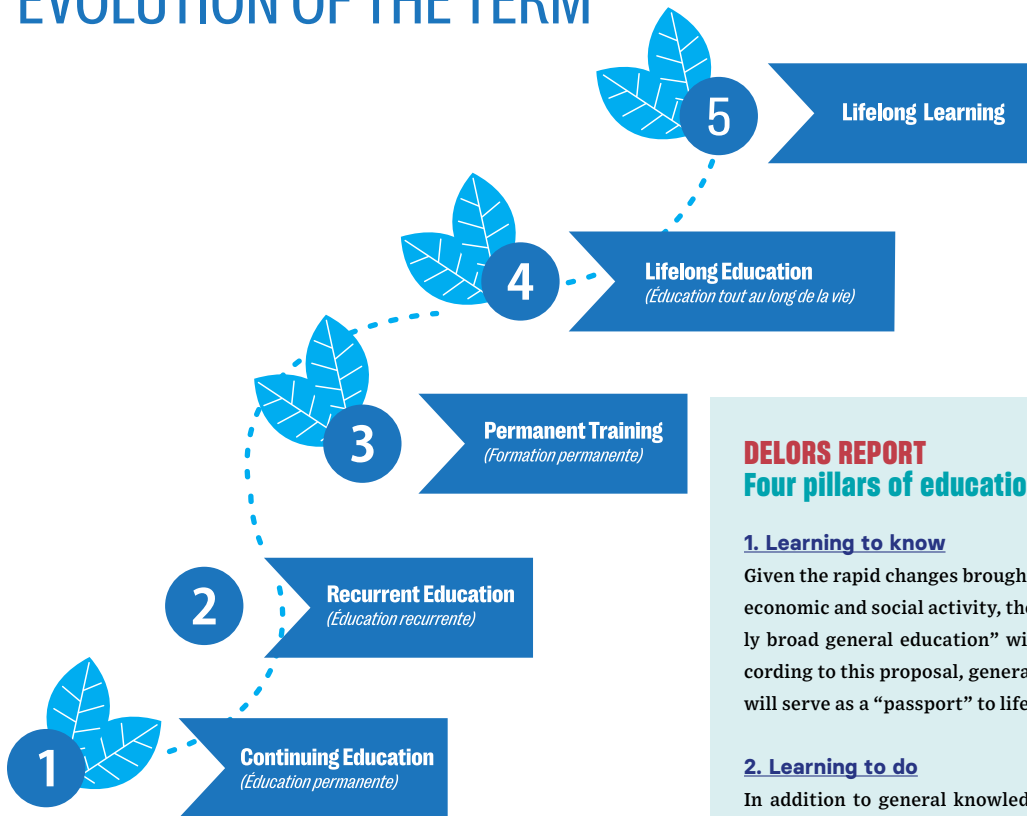
46 Delors cited in Elfert, p. 177

47 Elfert, 2018, p. 177

48 Biesta cited in Elfert, p. 86

Lifelong Learning

EVOLUTION OF THE TERM



→ LEARNING TO BE IN THE COMMUNITY

For Delors, lifelong learning emerges “as one of the keys of the 21st century [...] to face the challenges posed by a rapidly changing world.”⁴⁹

The Delors Report warns that this concept is not new and that many previous reports on education have already emphasized the need for people to continue learning to face new work or personal situations. It adds that the only way to satisfy this need - becoming stronger and stronger - was for “each individual to learn how to learn.”⁵⁰ In addition, Delors adds a requirement that must go hand in hand with lifelong learning: “a better understanding of other people and the world [...] mutual understanding, peaceful exchange, and [the] harmony.”⁵¹

According to the Delors Report, this vision of learning as something that happens in the community laid the foundations for the four pillars⁵² around which education and learning must organize.

DELORS REPORT Four pillars of education and learning

1. Learning to know

Given the rapid changes brought about by scientific progress and new forms of economic and social activity, the emphasis must be on “combining a sufficiently broad general education” with the in-depth study of specific subjects. According to this proposal, general knowledge, and the ability to “learn to learn” will serve as a “passport” to lifelong education.⁵³

2. Learning to do

In addition to general knowledge, education must provide skills that “allow people to deal with a variety of situations, often unpredictable, and to work in a team, a characteristic that current educational methods do not address sufficiently.”⁵⁴ In addition, it suggests that these skills and abilities be developed through work experiences or social work since they are more easily acquired if students can test and develop them by alternating studies with work.

3. Learning to live together

It is necessary to “develop an understanding of other people and an appreciation of interdependence, carrying out joint projects and learning to manage conflict, in a spirit of respect for the values of pluralism, mutual understanding, and peace.”⁵⁵

4. Learning to be

In the 21st century, “everyone will need to exercise greater interdependence combined with a stronger sense of personal responsibility for achieving common goals;”⁵⁶ none of the “hidden talents” in each person should be left untapped. These hidden talents are memory, reasoning power, imagination, physical ability, aesthetic sense, ability to communicate with others, the group leader’s natural charisma, and self-awareness.

⁴⁹ Delors et al., 1996, p. 20

⁵⁰ Delors et al., 1996, p. 20

⁵¹ Delors et al., 1996, p. 20

⁵² Delors et al., 1996, p. 85–98

⁵³ Delors et al., 1996, p. 21

⁵⁴ Delors et al., 1996, p. 21

⁵⁵ Delors et al., p. 37

⁵⁶ Delors et al., p. 21

The fourth pillar, learning to be, constitutes the common thread that unites this report with its predecessor, the Faure Report (which, as we know, in English bears just that title: Learning to Be). The objective of developing human potential and revealing “the treasure within each one of us” is entrenched in this pillar.⁵⁷ To achieve this, Delors proposes:

... moving beyond an instrumental view of education as a process one undergoes to achieve specific goals (skills, abilities, or economic potential) to one that emphasizes the development of the whole person; in short, learning to be.⁵⁸

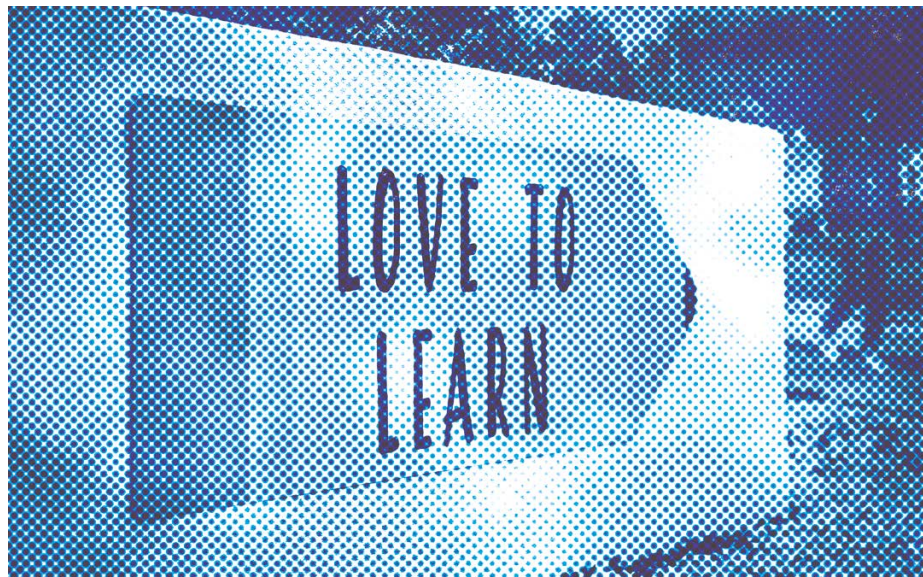
The pillar, learning to be, once again brought to the table an issue that concerned Faure: the instrumentalization of the human being and education. Although this pillar gave continuity to the Faure Report, Elfert observed that, at the same time, it marked the main difference between the two documents. Whereas the Faure Report chose to pose “learning to be” as an existential question of what it means to be human, the Delors Report included that question in the third pillar, Learning to Live Together,⁵⁹ expanding this further and bringing it closer to what Delors considered the key to the education of the future: “Making human beings more aware of themselves and of what surrounds them.”⁶⁰ With this perspective in mind, the reporting commission expanded the third pillar to express the need to “develop an understanding

of others and their history, [of their] traditions and spiritual values [...] creating a new spirit that, guided by the recognition of their growing interdependence and a common analysis of the risks and challenges of the future, would induce people to implement common projects.”⁶¹

The differences between the Faure and Delors reports indicated changing educational priorities and the challenges facing education (and UNESCO) when both were published. In the 1990s, Delors anticipated the changes that education and the world would face and argued that, before them...

*... education has to develop in young people the ability to know themselves and to behave autonomously and respectfully toward others in a rapidly changing environment, increasingly saturated with “brutal information” and “technical aggressions” [...] Education must be oriented toward the creation of enlightened, autonomous, and responsible citizens and toward the construction of intelligence that encompasses the ability to feel and reason.*⁶²

Laying many of the foundations of today’s inclusive and planetary education, the Delors Report highlighted the link between lifelong learning and social stability. It addressed many social issues, such as migration, social cohesion, inequality, the economy, and the unequal distribution of knowledge.



⁵⁷ Delors et al., 1996, p. 86

⁵⁸ Delors et al., 1996, p. 86

⁵⁹ Delors cited in Elfert, 2018, p. 178

⁶⁰ Delors cited in Elfert, 2018, p. 178

⁶¹ Delors et al., 1996, p. 20

⁶² Delors cited in Elfert, 2018, p. 179

SOME OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE DELORS REPORT⁶³

About the role of education in society

- We must be guided by the utopian goal of leading the world toward greater mutual understanding, a greater sense of responsibility, and greater solidarity through accepting our spiritual and cultural differences.
- Education has the universal task of helping people understand the world and others.
- Education cannot solve social problems alone but can foster community coexistence by integrating minority groups, always respecting their differences and personalities.
- Active citizenship must begin at school.
- The role of education is to provide children and adults with the cultural background and historical perspective that allows them to make sense of the changes taking place in the world.
- Creating a new development model that respects nature and structures people's time is necessary.

About the teachers

- Elevating the status of the teaching profession will be essential for lifelong learning to fulfill its central function of advancing our societies and strengthening mutual understanding among people.
- To achieve this, society must recognize teachers and give them the authority they deserve and the necessary resources to practice their profession.
- Emphasis should fall on the student-teacher relationship. Technology should only support this relationship.
- Teamwork must be essential in the teaching exercise.
- Teachers must also have the opportunity to update their knowledge and skills. Their professional lives must be organized to have time for training, studying for licenses, and sabbatical periods.
- Institutions from different countries must establish alliances and carry out teacher exchanges. These exchanges give teachers added value in exercising their profession with proximity to other cultures, civilizations, and experiences.

About educational policies

- Education is a community asset that market forces cannot regulate alone.
- It is essential to involve all societal actors in educational decision-making.
- Administrative decentralization and the autonomy of educational establishments lead to development and innovation.
- A quarter of the economic resources earmarked for development should be appropriated for education.
- Debt swaps (buying foreign debt, converting it into national currency, and using the resulting proceeds to finance conservation activities) should be encouraged to offset the effects of adjustment policies and procedures to reduce internal and external deficits.

About primary and secondary education

- Strengthening primary education through specific, contextual adaptation is necessary.
- Secondary education must be rethought in the context of lifelong learning, providing the individual with various paths and the possibility of returning to the educational system at any time if they have abandoned it.

About the universities

Universities must play a central role as intellectual authorities of society. This role should play out through reflection and discussion on the ethical and social problems that affect the world. Universities must fulfill four essential functions:

- Prepare students for research and teaching.
- Provide highly specialized training courses adapted to the needs of economic and social life.
- Be open to all people and broadly cover the many aspects of lifelong learning.
- Promote international cooperation.

Impact of the Delors Report

Despite the little research on the influence of the Delors Report on educational policies worldwide, its impact is notable in the academic world. The document has been widely cited in educational literature and research articles.

→ CRITICISM OF THE DELORS REPORT (THE VISION OF THE WORLD BANK)

Given these recommendations, there is no doubt that the Delors Report stood in the tradition of UNESCO and its founders by defining the purpose of education as dignifying human beings by developing their potential and, with this, contributing to the improvement of society.

⁶³ Delors et al., 1996, p. 34-42

⁶⁴ ¿Qué es el Canje de Deuda EE. UU. – C.R.? (What is the US–C.R. Debt Swap?) <https://primercanjedeuda.org/que-es-el-i-canje-de-deuda/>

However, as mentioned above, critics of the report noted that its “language of idealism and dreams” offered rather general recommendations, with good intentions, but with “very few answers to the most pressing questions.”⁶⁶

As Elfert mentions, regarding realistic recommendations, the report fell short and was even less pragmatic than its predecessor. It did not answer, for example, questions such as how to finance education, an issue to which the World Bank offered a much more concrete answer in its report [Priorities and Strategies for Education: a World Bank Review](#), published in 1995.⁶⁷

According to Elfert, these two reports differed meaningfully and exemplified how far apart the World Bank’s and UNESCO’s visions had diverged. While the latter presented a utopian vision of education, the World Bank report took a practical approach, stressing the role of education in achieving economic development. Betting on the theory of human capital –and evidencing once again the two divergent worldviews (the two faces of the god Janus)- *Priorities and Strategies for Education* identified two main aspects of education: “It must satisfy the growing demand [...] for workers adaptable who can easily acquire new skills and must support the continuous expansion of knowledge.”⁶⁸

Two other impact reports

While the Four Pillars (the significant legacy of the Delors Report) have become slogans without being transformed into educational policy, two reports have been widely adopted by different governments, influencing educational policy worldwide. The first, [Education and the Economy in a Changing Society](#) (1989), published by the OECD, became “the bible for education ministers.”⁶⁹ The second was by the European Union (EU), which entered the competition in the field of educational policy with its 1995 publication [Teaching and Learning: Toward the Learning Society](#), a document that directed European policy on education throughout life and which gave rise to the following year, 1996, declared the European Year of Lifelong Learning.⁷⁰

Overshadowed report

The Delors Report was overshadowed because it did not offer a sufficiently practical alternative to overcome the pragmatic approach and the hegemony of discourse adopted by both the World Bank and the OECD.



→ RELEVANCE OF THE DELORS REPORT

Elfert points out that the Delors Report’s relevance resides precisely in its challenge to the predominant instrumental vision, exacerbated in the last two decades.

This challenge has always mobilized UNESCO since its inception. Like Faure, Delors feared “...the invasion of the educational system by the pressure of the economy [...] which leads to underestimating the high mission of education,”⁷¹ and their fears were not unfounded: The approaches of the World Bank and UNESCO highlight what Peter Jarvis called the “gradual colonization of education by the world of work,”⁷² a colonization that critics of the concept of education throughout life had already anticipated since the 1970s.

⁶⁵ Elfert, 2018, p. 186

⁶⁶ Elfert, 2018, p. 180

⁶⁷ *Priorities and Strategies for Education: A World Bank Review* (1995). World Bank Group. <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/117381468331890337/priorities-and-strategies-for-education-a-world-bank-review>

⁶⁸ World Bank, 1995, p. 1

⁶⁹ Rubenson cited in Elfert, 2018, p. 193

⁷⁰ Jarvis, 2007, p. 70

⁷¹ Delors cited in Elfert, p. 183

⁷² Jarvis, 2007, p. 69

→ THE CUERNAVACA MANIFESTO (INTELLECTUALS' CRITIQUE OF LIFELONG LEARNING)

In the summer of 1974, a small group of academicians met with the Austrian philosopher Ivan Illich in Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico, to formulate their concerns about lifelong education. These concerns appeared in the Cuernavaca Manifesto, which argued that education throughout life ran the risk of prolonging the coercion of education already represented by the school. They feared that the latter would become a “trap for life” that would establish continuing education as a mandatory requirement to obtain social benefits: “...the Manifesto translates our opposition to compulsory adult education imposed by law or social pressure.”⁷³

For this group, the concept of lifelong education was likely to be usurped by the new capitalist society, where the message conveyed was that “everyone could move up the social ladder thanks to education,”⁷⁴ that is, through meritocracy, becoming a means of individual advancement to the detriment of collective advancement.

The Manifesto also warned that continuing education could lead to a “devaluation of skills” by turning them into mere certifications (“titles”) necessary to advance on the social and professional scale, a phenomenon that we see today in the trend toward training “based on competencies.”⁷⁵

The concerns of critics of lifelong education had already warned about the ambiguity of the concept (as presented in the two faces of Jano): on the one hand, lifelong education can empower people to adapt to rapid social changes; on the other, it could become a commodity, putting pressure on human beings to learn for life.

This ambiguity is prevalent today and seems more strongly entrenched at a time when lifelong learning is a global trend that is growing stronger than ever.

02 THE NEW VISION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

2.1 Theoretical resources for understanding the evolution of Lifelong Learning

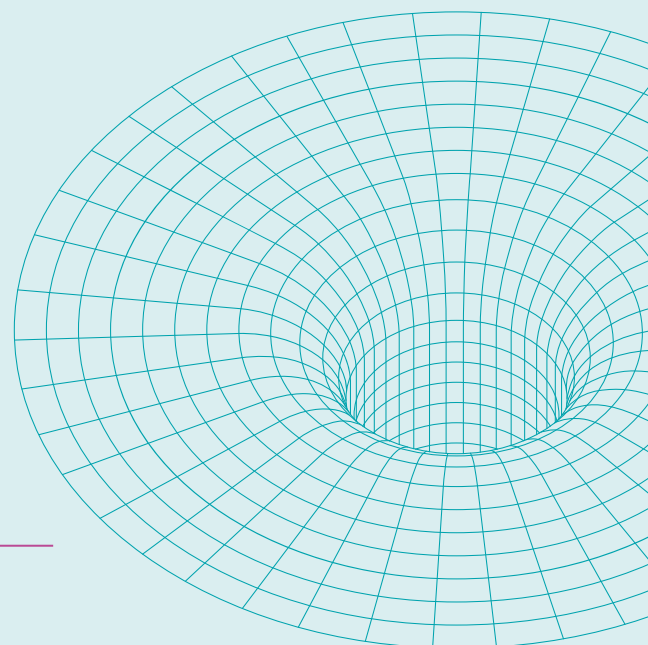
→ LIFELONG LEARNING MOVES AWAY FROM THE HUMANIST VISION

As seen in the previous chapter, the concept we know today as lifelong learning emerged in the context of rapid change, economic growth, and profound social transformation. Furthermore, its evolution since the 1960s has been in continuous tension with “the technical and economic demands that arose from globalization, capitalism, and the development of human capital theory.”⁷⁶

This tension has resulted in lifelong learning today having less to do with UNESCO's humanist vision of a “learning society” and leaning more toward a “knowledge economy” based on human capital theory.

Undoubtedly, as Jarvis points out, the concept of lifelong learning is enjoying a resurgence, but this owes more to the urgency of responding to current social conditions than addressing the natural human need to learn continually.

To delve into this subject, we first need to examine some theoretical resources about how we learn and the importance of the social context where it occurs (the nominal part of the concept “learning throughout life,” learning: How do humans learn?). It will allow us to locate the axis of the current controversy around lifelong learning more precisely and shed light on what must come together to project a new vision.



⁷³ Elfert, 2018, p. 137

⁷⁴ Elfert, 2018, p. 137

⁷⁵ Elfert, 2018, p.138

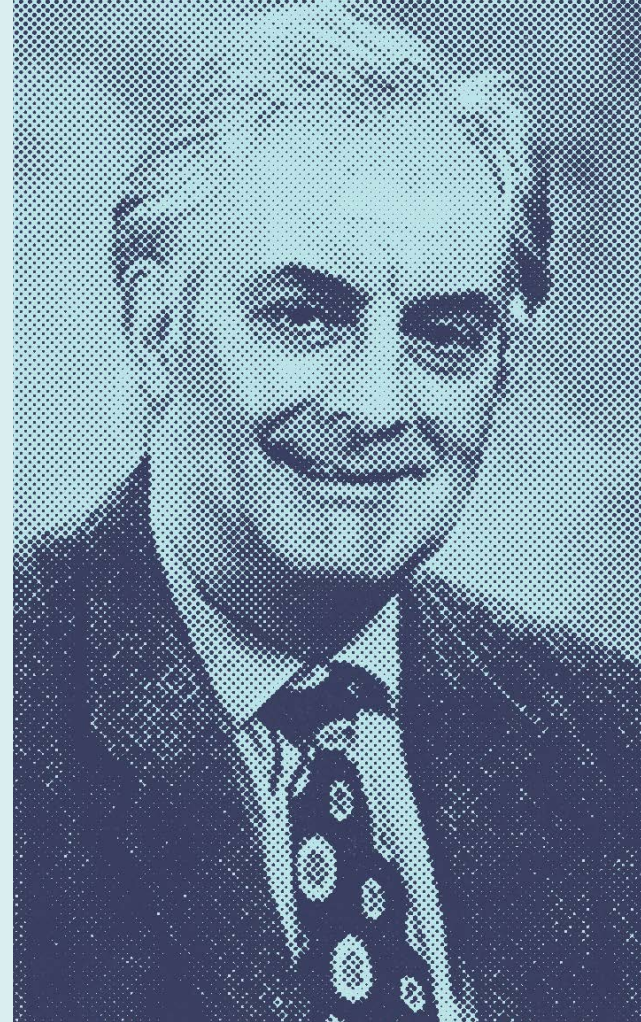
⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 1413

→ LEARNING IN THE SOCIAL CONTEXT (JARVIS)

According to Jarvis, human learning is “the process of transforming all of our experience through thought, action, and emotion, and thereby [of] transforming ourselves as we continue to build perceptions of external reality into our biography.”⁷⁷ In other words, learning is a process of transforming the experiences we have when we interact with the outside world, including, society, and therefore “no learning theory can omit the broader social world within which we live.” So, how do we learn?

We learn something new when a disjunction occurs: a separation between two realities. Jarvis explains that when we cannot take something in the world for granted, we enter a state of disjunction. Learning occurs “when harmony between our biography (past experiences) and our experience of ‘now’ needs to be established or re-established.”⁷⁹

The first stage of the learning experience begins with bodily sensations (sound, sight, smell...), which we later transform into personal meaning. This first sensory stage occurs more consciously during childhood than in other stages. Due to his young age, many sensations are new to an infant, so he continuously learns. On the other hand, in adulthood, new experiences occur less frequently. However, the process is the same for infants and adults when encountering a new situation or sensation. Once we enter a state of disjunction, we ask ourselves, “What do I do now? What does it mean? What is that smell? What is that new sound?”⁸⁰ A new learning cycle begins from these sensations, as shown in the following figure.



THE TRANSFORMATION OF SENSATIONS IN LEARNING

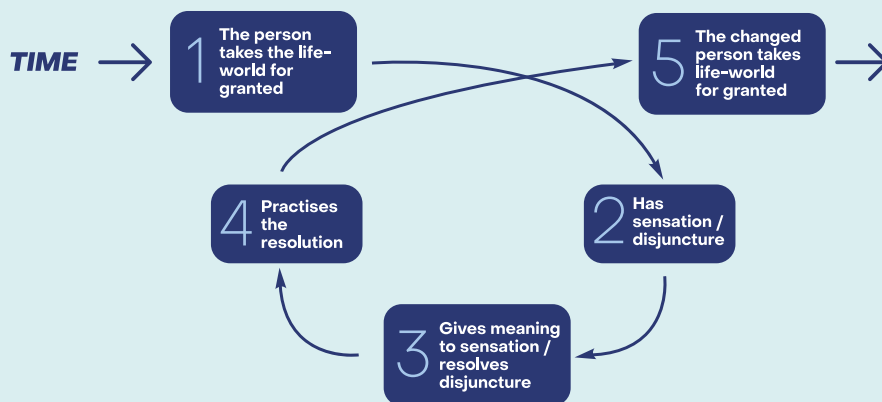


FIG. THE TRANSFORMATION OF SENSATIONS: INITIAL AND NON REFLECTIVE LEARNING / JARVIS (2007)

Humans learn through the transformation of sensations and simultaneously transform themselves through this new learning.

As this process occurs in our social context (since “learning is a set of sociocultural integrated practices”),⁸¹ we receive continuous feedback that can confirm if the learning we have obtained is socially acceptable or must start with the process again. So, we go through a “trial and error” process to learn the socially acceptable response. In this sense, we apply social meaning to our coexistence in the life-world - as Jarvis calls it.

Learning is a social necessity; through it, human beings learn to be and to exist in the world.

⁷⁷ Jarvis, 2007, p. 5

⁷⁸ Jarvis, 2007, p. 2

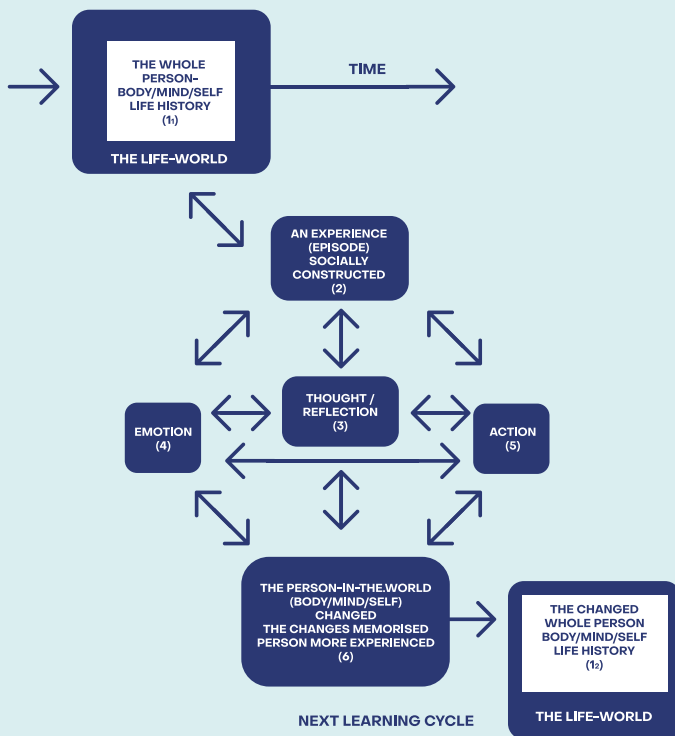
⁷⁹ Jarvis, 2007, p. 4

⁸⁰ Jarvis, 2007, p. 3

⁸¹ Usher, R., Edwards, R. (2007). Lifelong Learning - Signs, Discourses, Practices. (p. 2). Springer.



Next, we present the diagram where Jarvis illustrates the trial-and-error process and the person's transformation through learning.



Thus, we can conclude that learning implies three transformations: that of the sensation, that of the person, and that of the social situation. At this intersection with the life-world, we have experiences that present us with learning opportunities.

→ INCESSANT DISJUNCTION (BAUMAN)

Nevertheless, what happens when the life-world changes continuously and rapidly, as in contemporary society? Our times induce a state of incessant disjunction in people continuously exposed to opportunities and an actual learning requirement.

The sociologist Zygmunt Bauman has defined our time as “liquid modernity,” saying that in it, progress occurs through an “implacable and inexorable change that, far from auguring peace and rest, heralds a continuous crisis and tension that will make it impossible to have the shortest moment of respite.”⁸³

In this situation, individuals are continuously forced to learn to find their place in society. “Lifelong learning is now endemic!”⁸⁴ exclaims Jarvis. Consequently, we live conscious of continuously being subjected to potential learning experiences.

At the same time, the global pressures of the advanced capitalist world and the dizzying pace in which we live have made us focus consciously, above all, on what we know or suppose we can influence.

For Bauman, this feeling of instability and insecurity becomes a highly profitable “fear capital”⁸⁵ that leads to individualization. Human learning has been profoundly affected by the changes of globalization.

2.2 LEARNING IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

→ THE IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON LEARNING

Since the Industrial Revolution, the world has witnessed a gradual acceleration of social, political, and economic changes. Finally, since 1996, education – which has always been affected by critical historical changes – “has more followed the path of the economy.”⁸⁶ The transition to more flexible and fluid (“liquid”) forms of work in globalized consumer societies demands more mobility and adaptability of the workforce, which has profoundly impacted education.

⁸² Jarvis, 2007, p. 6

⁸³ Bauman, Z. (2007). *Tiempos líquidos*. (p. 21). Tusquets.

⁸⁴ Jarvis, 2007, p. 5

⁸⁵ Bauman, Z. (2007). *Tiempos líquidos*. Tusquets.

⁸⁶ Elfert, 2018, p. 193

Because society is fluid (“liquid”) and its demands are continuously changing, learning is also changing and needs to become life-long rather than just recurring, Jarvis warns. Learning throughout life is necessary for everyone to adapt and feel part of the world.⁸⁷

→ EDUCATION: INDUSTRY AND MARKET

In the book *Globalization, Lifelong Learning and the Learning Society* (Routledge, 2007), Jarvis points out that, due to capitalism, many cultural institutions –including educational ones– have turned into industries. He argues that “the market has transformed traditional institutions into tradable products [and so] education is now a product, and its institutions are now industries, [...] people [have become] resources and even capital.”⁸⁸ Coupled with this, global forces demand a workforce that is not only more educated but continually educated.

According to the same author, adult education is disappearing in its most traditional sense, and lifelong learning is questioned profoundly, precisely reflecting these changes and demands of capitalism.

Jarvis points out that although learning is individual and personal, lifelong learning has become a “social phenomenon” that involves learning and education, understood as institutionalization.

The author describes lifelong learning as a “kind of marketplace” with learning opportunities and offerings of various courses. However, he cautions that, like any market, the lifelong learning market will favor those who have the financial means to participate in it and hurt those who do not, who are already disadvantaged.⁹⁰

In addition, the fact that it is the individual's responsibility to acquire their learning implies that those who do not do so are seen or qualified as irresponsible.

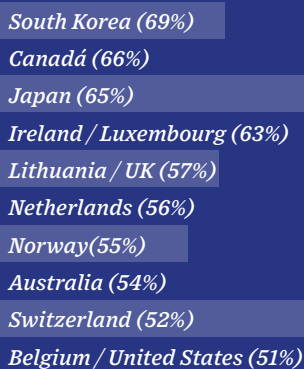
Gradual colonization of education by the world of work⁹¹

Throughout the years, the education time has lengthened. Although not all the causes of this are due to globalization, in large part, it is due to the growing demands of industry and commerce for an educated workforce. The OECD points out: “... as globalization and technology continue to reshape the needs of labor markets around the world, the demand for people with a broader knowledge base and more specialized skills continues to increase.”⁹²

An example is how, as emerging economies change rapidly, the need for higher education is also increasing, leading more countries to see increases in their rate of young people completing university education.

According to the OECD's *Education at a Glance 2022* report,⁹³ the average proportion of young adults (aged 25-34) with a tertiary degree increased from 27% in 2000 to 48% in 2021.

According to the report, the ten countries with the most people between 25 and 34 years old with tertiary education are:



A country with a high percentage of educated population attracts more investment. This has forced countries that want to attract domestic investment to provide more education for their people (naturally, Jarvis notes, governments can claim that this is in the national interest since it is essential to foster an educated workforce).⁹⁵

Although the education industry is an essential economic factor in capitalist countries, education itself has always been a weak link in its production chains, so it is not surprising that lifelong learning is now a focus of these societies, where the continuous updating of the labor force has become decisive.

⁸⁷ Jarvis, 2007, p. 39

⁸⁸ Jarvis, 2007, p. 58-59

⁸⁹ Jarvis, 2007, p. 67

⁹⁰ Jarvis, 2007, p. 67

⁹¹ Jarvis, 2007, p. 69

⁹² OECD (2019). *Education at a Glance 2019: OECD Indicators*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/f8d7880d-en>

⁹³ OECD (2021). *Education at a Glance 2022: OECD Indicators*. OECD Publishing. https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/education-at-a-glance-2022_3197152b-en

⁹⁴ The OECD defines the tertiary-educated population as those who have completed the highest level of education, by age group. This includes both theoretical programs leading to advanced research or high skill professions such as medicine and more vocational programs leading to the job market.

⁹⁵ Jarvis, P. (2007). *Globalization, Lifelong Learning and the Learning Society*. Sociological Perspectives. Routledge

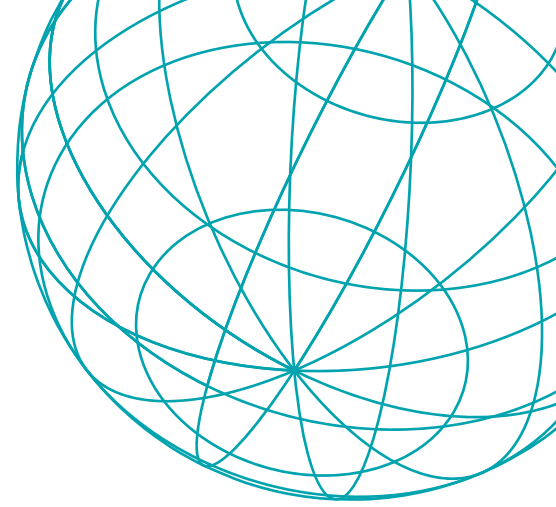
2.3 THE NEW THREE-DIMENSIONAL LIFELONG LEARNING

→ RESPONSE TO A LIQUID WORLD

A continuously changing, liquid world demands that we be quick to respond. Ecologically –the experts point out– the time to act is already reduced to a few years before the problems become irreversible. However, it is not only in ecology where the action is urgent. Difficulties spread everywhere (as liquids do) and invade the existential aspects of individuals and social and planetary orders.

This accelerated rate of change is producing transformations at all levels, and, as we saw in previous sections, the disjunction that occurs when we cannot take anything in the world for granted forces us to continue learning permanently. In this liquid society, “people are forced to learn informally and almost incidentally to live [...] Technological innovations are creating new lifestyles,”⁹⁶ imposing a culture of continuous learning for survival.

The future has closed in on us, and the present must be continuously reviewed and unraveled to understand and guide it out of that ubiquitous disjunction. Such review falls crucially on a socially central and broad issue such as education. Today, it demands to be approached with a critical vision, beginning –as we have tried to do in the previous chapters– with the reassessment and reconsideration of the central positions at stake. In this work, it is urgent to reconsider the concepts and terms that each of these



positions has used, often ambiguously, in their descriptions of the world.

This reassessment of contributions in past decades must progress into integration into a new model that overcomes divergences. It is not the purpose of this report to propose this new model but to add to its construction: to show some strands that can be crucial to guide the perspective and favor the task in the immeasurable network of information that makes up the current landscape.

→ DISAMBIGUATION OF CONCEPTS AND TERMS

For millennia, humans never questioned the fact that one was always learning. As we have seen, it was not until the 20th century that the topic came into discussion, and an attempt began to separate ideas such as education and learning from daily and practical life. Thus, the concept we have today of lifelong learning results from clashes between different philosophical and educational positions and diverse social and economic interests. In this context, simple terms such as continuous, permanent, recurring, and many others became ideologized. It is necessary to review them again to understand their meaning, reduce their ambiguity, and ultimately choose the ones we will use to establish a new vision. (The SECOND PART of this report is a [Critical Glossary](#) that aims to offer some disambiguation of concepts and terms).

⁹⁶ Jarvis, 2007, p. 6



→ THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF LIFELONG LEARNING

A new vision of lifelong learning must consider it as a process in three dimensions: the time of each human life (from birth to death); its breadth, which encompasses all human exchanges and the consequent learning that the person faces at that time, and a third that alludes to the depth attained by those learning.

This vision also aspires to integrate the humanist approach with the instrumental and ethical purpose of education and its technical purpose. The aim is to unite in a single holistic dimension the economic/labor vertex with all other aspects of human life: social, cultural, spiritual, and civic.

This perspective assumes that both the interrelation of the interior spheres of the person and human interdependence in all social orders are no longer a choice but a reality that must be strengthened and leveraged.

As we have seen, lifelong learning is not just another educational policy or a new way of learning; It is a sociocultural process that encompasses all the learning, skills, and competencies that a person acquires from childhood to old age in different settings (family, schools, institutions, jobs, and community), in different environments (formal, non-formal, and informal) and with different objectives (personal, civic, social, and labor).

Elfert's three dimensions

Elfert⁹⁷ describes the three dimensions of lifelong learning as follows: one, life-long (years of life), which reflects the useful life of the human being; another, life-wide, which refers to the different ways, environments, and situations in which human beings learn (formal, non-formal and informal, and a third, depth, which refers to the environment where the person uses this learning (usually work).

→ LEARN TO SOLVE

Learning in these three dimensions is fundamental for our time. This learning is not seen as a unilateral delivery to the population but instead responds to the urgent need to involve it in searching, developing, and applying solutions to all world problems. Today, humans who learn must do so to become part of the solution; learning must be complicit in every aspect of their lives. The convergence of the humanist and instrumental theories must consider that learning throughout the life of each human being contributes to the resolution of problems and conflicts in each place where they occur.

As Peter Jarvis says: "learning is a social necessity"⁹⁸ because it goes far beyond knowing and doing and helps us learn to be, exist, and inhabit the world together.

97 Elfert, M. (2018). UNESCO's utopia of lifelong learning: an intellectual history. Routledge. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000247753>

98 Jarvis, P. (2007). Globalization, Lifelong Learning and the Learning Society

2.4 TWO STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to the ecological aspect (which by definition encompasses the problem of life), two other aspects are fundamental in shaping future learning. One is the expansion to planetary levels of communication and information technologies, which bring individuals, institutions, and countries closer together with unprecedented fluidity, providing speed and extension to learning exchanges and, at the same time, favoring the “liquid” nature of modernity that, for Bauman imposes models of increasing individualization and relentlessly favors feelings of instability and insecurity in people.

The other critical aspect is the so-called longevity of society, that is, the impact that the increase in life expectancy worldwide has and will inevitably have on all social and planetary aspects.

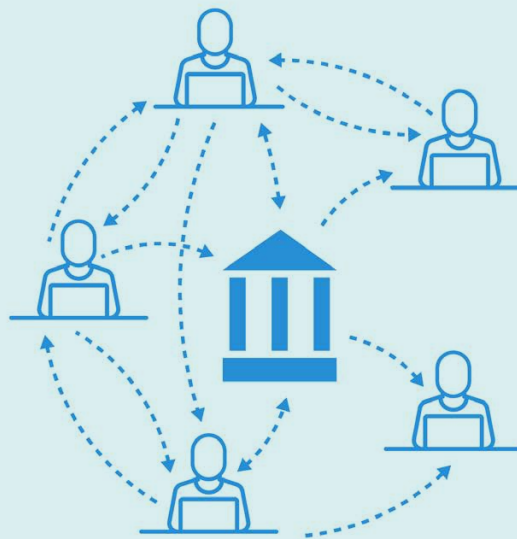
As we have said, both aspects must be considered to make them part of the solution in all planetary orders.

→ THE WORLD CLASSROOM MOOCs (MASSIVE ONLINE OPEN COURSES)

As we said, the world is a big “classroom” that exposes us to continuous possible learning situations.

We could say that this great classroom is bigger than ever today. Thanks to globalization, the internet, and advances in the telecommunications sector, our existence today is “global,” and so are our interactions and learning opportunities. Technological advances have “blurred” borders in the digital world (although, paradoxically, others are closing in “real life” or IRL to use more ad hoc jargon with the digital environment). Today, digital tools favor ubiquitous learning, that is, learning that occurs anywhere and at any time, thanks to the use of technologies integrated into our daily lives in the most everyday objects.⁹⁹

The rise of the Internet, Open Educational Resources (OER), and Open Social Learning prepared the ground for the launch



MOOCs

Massive Online Open Course

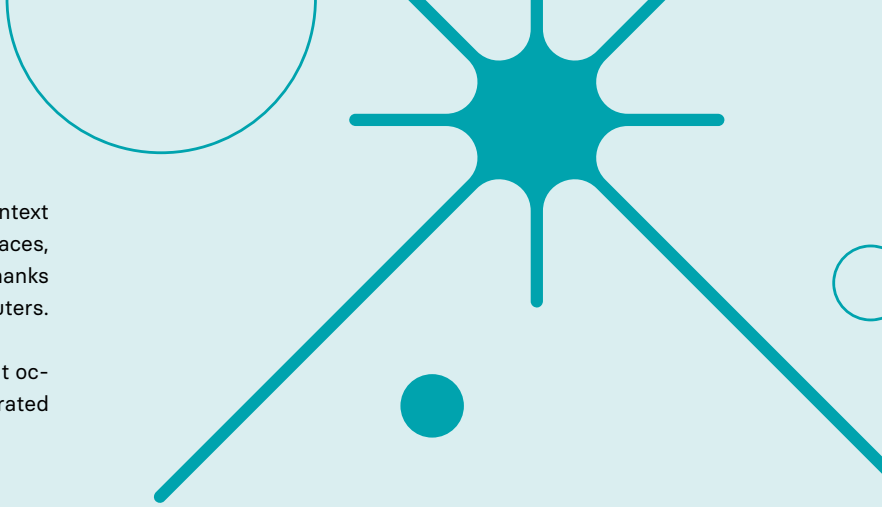
500+ Universities
4200 Courses
35 Million Students

of the first MOOC in history in 2008. Such was the furor for these courses that 2012 was considered “The Year of the MOOC”,¹⁰⁰ However, although the offerings of courses, providers, and enrollees in MOOC courses have grown since then, this [alternative credential](#) has not met the expectation of democratizing access to higher education.¹⁰¹ However, platforms such as Coursera, edX, and Udacity continue to expand their course offerings in synergies with universities. Today, more than 1240 higher education institutions¹⁰² have at least one MOOC course on one platform, providing universities with the necessary infrastructure to create a broader online presence and attract a more diverse and needy student body, different from those of the “traditional” university student.

More than a decade after their invention, MOOCs have gained a second wind thanks to the creation of MOOC-based degrees offered on these platforms, ranging from professional certificates to entirely online undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. The current economic, political, and social context has contributed partly to the increased use of this type of alternative credentialing in recent years. On the one hand, the culture of “upskilling” and “reskilling” requires us to continue learning and continuously updating ourselves due to the precariousness and instability in the labor market. On the other hand, the increase in the cost of university tuition has also contributed to more people turning to these alternative credentials to obtain a university degree or certification that allows them to remain current in the labor market.

The commitment to adopting alternative credentials as a resource that adds value to the academic degree has increased. [Tec de Monterrey](#) published an internal regulation that recognizes alternative credentials independently as continuing education programs. The university established the conditions for granting academic credit at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels through these certificates. The institutional characteristics and definitions that distinguish alternative credentials, macro-credentials, micro-credentials, and digital badges were detailed for integration into the educational offerings.

- ⁹⁹ Glosario de Innovación Educativa. Observatorio de Innovación Educativa. <https://observatorio.tec.mx/edu-news/glosario-de-innovacion-educativa>
- ¹⁰⁰ Pappano, L. (2012). The Year of the MOOC. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/04/education/edlife/massive-open-online-courses-are-multiplying-at-a-rapid-pace.html> Tusquets.
- ¹⁰¹ More on this topic in Edu Trends Alternative Credentials. Educational Innovation Observatory (2019) <https://observatorio.tec.mx/edu-trends-credenciales-alternativas>
- ¹⁰² Data obtained from Class Central <https://www.class-central.com/universities>



With the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 in this context of the labor market, many homes became classrooms, workspaces, meeting rooms, television studios, leisure, and meeting places thanks to technologies such as mobile devices, video cameras, and computers.

Today, digital tools favor ubiquitous learning, that is, learning that occurs anywhere and at any time, thanks to the technologies integrated into our day-to-day lives in the most everyday objects.

→ THE 'SILVER TSUNAMI' (THE LONGEVITY REVOLUTION)

Not only our environment (physical and virtual) has expanded, but so has the time factor. Life expectancy has been increasing worldwide. According to the UK [Centre For Ageing Better](#), life expectancy has tripled throughout human history¹⁰³ However, living longer will significantly affect employment, education, public health sectors, and insurance and pension companies. Society, in general, will be affected by these demographic changes. Are we prepared for these changes? Considering the current social, economic, and political context, as well as the lessons that the pandemic has taught us, it is clear that, as a society, we are not prepared for the general population's aging.

Until now, this "silver wave," or "silver tsunami," as it is also known, represented an opportunity for many people to expand the labor force. However, suppose we do not consider that living longer will also imply a potential increase in the typical diseases and pathologies of the elderly, such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, hearing problems, arthritis, and dementia, among others. In that case, the future will take us by surprise.

The aging of the population will impact all aspects of society, including the labor and financial markets, the demand for goods and services, education, housing, health, transportation, social protection, and the care economy.

Access to education is decisive for life expectancy, not only because of the educational level's implications for people's socioeconomic levels but also because of the benefits that learning throughout life brings to our bodies and minds.

In this sense, it is worth acknowledging the work of universities, collectives, groups, and age-inclusive institutions in promoting active aging.

Lifelong learning is fundamental to physical and mental health; however, not everyone can afford this activity. Until now, the responsibility of staying active has fallen mainly on individuals who assume the cost of enrolling in a course or program for older adults.

Considering the above, the next few years will be vital in preparing ourselves for the implications of an increasingly aging world population. We will have to assume these challenges in the community and be aware that the scope of these challenges goes far beyond the demands of the labor market. The lessons that the pandemic left us are clear: we do not have sufficient support systems and networks for the needs of the older population and the working class; we need a holistic vision of public health that integrates preventive medicine and mental health care; finally, we must consider that the fast pace of life is making us sick.

What role do universities have in these challenges? As spaces for generating and transferring knowledge and engines of change, universities will play a fundamental role in creating proposals to solve these grand challenges. As verified in this report, several universities are already working on lifelong learning proposals beyond continuous training, integrating different generations in the same space, thus producing a solid intergenerational community committed to society.

In Part Three of this report, we extensively address the issue of longevity in society, providing the international community with a directory of institutions worldwide that offer learning services to older adults.

This report is one of the examples of the concern and contribution that Tecnológico de Monterrey makes to promote learning throughout the length, breadth, and depth of human life.

¹⁰³ For more information on trends in life expectancy visit: <https://ageing-better.org.uk/blogs/why-are-people-living-longer>

PART II

CRITICAL GLOSSARY



**OF TERMS
ASSOCIATED WITH
LIFELONG
LEARNING**



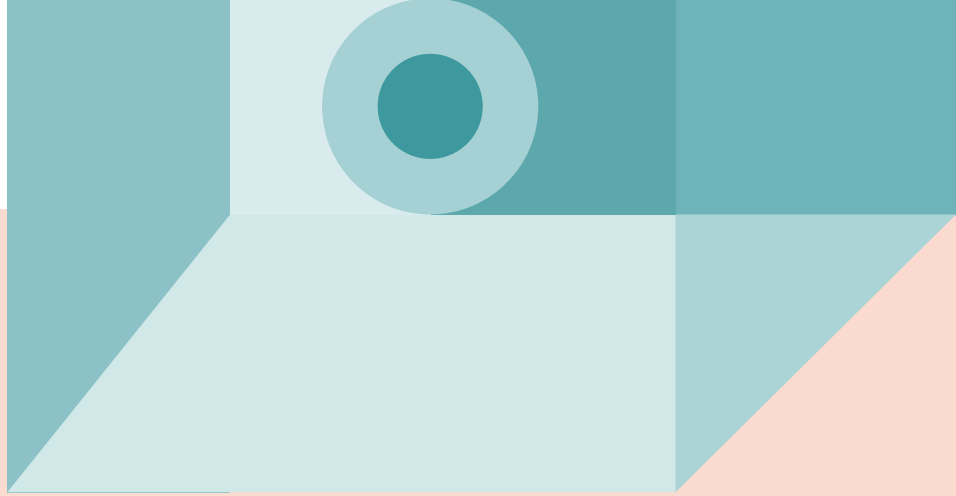
Lifelong Learning

Although the concept of *Lifelong Learning* has been widely and favorably received since the 1960s, from the 1990s, the use of the word education began to be questioned and replaced with learning.

Peter Jarvis highlights some of the reasons for this.¹⁰⁴

- Learning is an individual phenomenon. Education consists of providing learning to groups of people, primarily through institutions.
- Providing education is the State's or employers' responsibility; however, as neoliberalism spread, this responsibility fell on individuals; today, people must seek the opportunities and means to learn.
- In a rapidly changing world, practical knowledge must be learned in practice, outside of educational institutions, and not so much in theory, which is more typical of education.
- As more people began learning outside educational institutions, learning needed to be accredited formally.

104 Jarvis, P. (2007). *Globalization, Lifelong Learning and the Learning Society Sociological Perspectives*. Routledge



Lifelong Education and *Lifelong Learning* are often synonymous but have significant differences and are not interchangeable.

Unlike *lifelong education*, *lifelong learning*:

- Is not the responsibility of the State but of individuals.
- Is focused on practical knowledge.
- Occurs in an open market in which learners can choose the option that best suits their needs on the condition that it can be accredited and recognized.
- Recognizes that the learning acquired outside educational institutions is valid and must be accredited in the same way as the knowledge obtained and approved within them.
- Tends to become more institutionalized, regardless of formal structures.
- Assumes that society is changing rapidly, causing many people to face increasingly precarious daily living conditions; these people must experience learning processes that allow them to adapt to these conditions flexibly.
- Emphasizes that educational institutions must change rapidly to face the transformations of the world.
- Learning materials have become products to be bought (digested in the consumer society).

Lifelong learning is not just another educational policy or a new way of learning but a sociocultural process with multiple meanings.¹⁰⁵

Peter Jarvis defines *lifelong learning* as:

*The combination of processes... [by which] the person as a whole—body (genetic, physical, and biological) and mind (knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs, and senses)—experiences social situations whose perceived content becomes transformed cognitively, emotionally or practically (or any combination of these), and is integrated into [their] biography..., [shaping them as] a person who is continually changing (or becomes more experienced).*¹⁰⁶

The European Commission defines *lifelong learning* as “all learning activities that occur throughout life to improve knowledge, skills, and competencies within a personal, civic, social and/or work scenario.”¹⁰⁷

The OECD defines *lifelong learning* as:

*... a process of individual learning and development, ... from the cradle to the grave, [i.e., comprising] from early childhood learning to retirement learning. It is an inclusive concept that refers not only to education in formal settings, such as schools, universities, and adult education institutions, but also to “lifelong” learning in informal settings, at home, at work, and in the community.*¹⁰⁸

Based on the above definitions, we can conclude that:

Lifelong learning is a sociocultural process that encompasses all the learning, skills, and competencies that a person acquires from childhood to old age in different settings (family, schools, vocational training institutions, universities, workplaces, community, etc.), in different settings (formal, non-formal and informal), and with different objectives (personal, professional, civic, or social).

¹⁰⁵Usher, R., & Edwards, R. (2007). *Lifelong Learning - Signs, Discourses, Practices*. Springer.

¹⁰⁶Jarvis, 2007, p. 1

¹⁰⁷Commission of the European Communities. (2001). *Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality*. Commission of the European Communities.

¹⁰⁸OECD. (1996). *Lifelong learning for all: meeting of the Education Committee at Ministerial level, 16-17 January 1996*. OCDE.

LIFELONG LEARNING (TYPES AND SITUATIONS)

According to the situations in which it occurs, lifelong learning falls into formal, informal, and non-formal classifications, which can be intentional or incidental. (Incidental learning occurs as a spontaneous consequence of some action or activity of daily life). The following figure shows the possible combinations.

TYPE →	INTENTIONAL	INCIDENTAL
SITUATION ↓		
FORMAL	A	NON-EXISTENT
NON-FORMAL	B	C
INFORMAL	NON-EXISTENT	D

Source: Adult Education and Lifelong Learning. Theory and Practice, Jarvis (2007)



LEARNING AS AN INDIVIDUAL PHENOMENON AND AS A SOCIAL PHENOMENON

According to Peter Jarvis, learning is intrinsically individual and existential since people “learn;” however, today, when we talk about lifelong learning, we refer to a social phenomenon. Learning is personal, but social institutions like the State and employers provide many learning opportunities. In this way, two possible definitions of lifelong learning emerge - one that emphasizes the individual and the private sphere and another that attends more to the social and the public sphere.

INDIVIDUAL/PERSONAL LIFELONG LEARNING

The combination of processes... [by which] the person as a whole—body (genetic, physical, and biological) and mind (knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs, and senses)—experiences social situations whose perceived content becomes transformed cognitively, emotionally or practically (or any combination of these), and is integrated into [their] biography..., [shaping them as] a person who is continually changing (or becomes more experienced).¹⁰⁹

SOCIAL/PUBLIC LIFELONG LEARNING

It is every [learning] opportunity made available [to society] by any institution..., and every process by which an individual can acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs, and meanings within the global society.”¹¹⁰

Although different, both definitions have features in common: the first offers a human and individual approach, and the second one extends to the social without abandoning the personal aspect; the former will probably be studied primarily by philosophers and psychologists, and the latter also by economists, political theorists, and sociologists.

Indeed, the study of lifelong learning requires a multi-disciplinary approach.

¹⁰⁹Jarvis, 2007, p. 1

¹¹⁰ Jarvis, 2007, p. 99



FORMAL, INFORMAL, AND NON-FORMAL LEARNING

In 1996, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) recognized that learning is an effort and activity carried out “from the cradle to the grave”¹¹¹ and occurs in multiple situations. Intending to develop strategies and opportunities for education throughout life, said organization and a group of experts from the educational field developed the following definitions.

FORMAL LEARNING

According to the OECD,¹¹² formal learning is intentional, organized, and structured. Formal learning opportunities are usually provided by an educational institution that offers a program or curriculum to achieve a specific academic goal or outcome. From the student’s point of view, formal learning is always intentional: that is, the explicit objective of the student is to acquire knowledge, skills, or competencies.

Formal learning includes courses with credit or some academic accreditation.

Typical examples of formal apprenticeships are those within the educational system or on-the-job training organized by the employer.

INFORMAL LEARNING

Informal learning is possibly the first learning that a person experiences. It is disorganized, has no set goal regarding learning outcomes, and is never intentional. It is often experiential learning or simply “experience.”

The idea of informal learning is that continuous living exposes the individual to new learning situations at work, home, or leisure (the world is a big “classroom” that exposes us to continuous learning situations).

NON-FORMAL LEARNING

Non-formal learning is the concept that has the least consensus. Nevertheless, most authors and literature on the subject agree that this type of learning may or may not be intentional and may or may not be provided by an institution. However, it always occurs as a product of organized activities, whether or not they have learning objectives

In some countries, the entire adult learning sector falls under non-formal learning

Non-formal learning provides some flexibility between formal and informal learning.

¹¹¹ OECD. (1996). *Lifelong learning for all: meeting of the Education Committee at Ministerial level, 16-17 January 1996*. Paris: OCDE.

¹¹² OECD. (2007). *Recognition of Non-formal and Informal Learning*. <https://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/recognitionofnon-formaland-informallearning-home.htm>

¹¹³ Ainsworth, H. L., & Eaton, S. E. (2010). *Formal, Non-Formal and Informal Learning in the Sciences*. Canada: Onate Press and Eaton International Consulting (EIC).



TYPE “A” LEARNING (FORMAL/INTENTIONAL)

Education or training occurs in an educational institution or any public or private institution.

TYPE “B” LEARNING (NON-FORMAL/INTENTIONAL)

It occurs at work or in the community when someone adopts the role of an apprentice who is guided in an organized way toward a goal by someone adopting the role of mentor.

TYPE “C” LEARNING (NON-FORMAL/ INCIDENTAL)

Like Type B learning, it occurs at work or in the community but without didactic structuring. It can be self-directed or involve other people. The former occurs, for example, when we learn to speak a language independently; the latter occurs when a group of children teaches a new member to play soccer.

TYPE “D” LEARNING (INFORMAL/ INCIDENTAL)

It refers to the preconscious and precognitive learning that occurs from birth. It is situational and the most common type of learning. It often results in *tacit knowledge*. Authors such as Jarvis and Bauman declare that, in a time of continuous changes and challenges like ours, human beings face an overload of this type of learning.

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Companies and employment organizations embraced *continuing professional development*, which gave way to *human resource development*. This last term caused controversy because it was considered morally questionable due to reducing human beings to capital goods. In addition, the expression seems to imply that the “resource” (human) would only develop while working.

The term exemplifies how linguistic ambiguity is confusing. Theodore Schultz, a noted economist, was explicitly opposed to treating people as means rather than ends yet was one of the first to use the terms *human capital* and *human resources*.

Despite this latent ambiguity, the expression “human resource development” has been the most popular in the wide range of terms used to describe professional education.

LIFELONG EDUCATION

(See [Lifelong Learning](#))

Lifelong education is not new; it has complemented *adult education* for many years. As early as 1919, the UK Reconstruction Department’s Adult Education Committee published a Report arguing that a lifelong educated population was vital to the future of the country:

*... adult education should not be seen as a luxury for a few exceptional people... nor as something [limited] to only a short period of early adulthood... [It is] a permanent national necessity, an inseparable aspect [of the concept] of citizenship and therefore should be universal and for life.*¹¹⁴

In 1976, R. H. Dave defined lifelong education as:

... a process to achieve personal, social, and professional development throughout the lives of individuals to improve the quality of life of these and their groups. It is an integral and unifying idea that includes formal, non-formal, and informal learning to acquire... the clarity that allows maximum development in life’s different stages and domains.

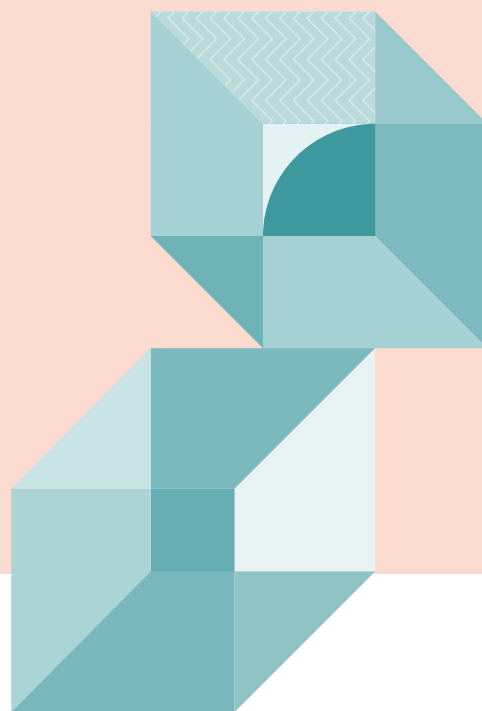
EDUCATION / LEARNING (DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE CONCEPTS)

Peter Jarvis distinguishes *education* and *learning*: “... traditionally, education has been considered the institutionalization of learning; learning is the process that occurs in individuals, and education is the social provision of opportunities to learn formally.”¹¹⁵

Learning is personal, and *education* is social and implies a responsibility of the State. Employers are co-responsible for providing teaching and learning opportunities.

¹¹⁴ Smith cited in Jarvis, 2007, p. 64

¹¹⁵ Jarvis, 2007, p. 63



EDUCATION / LEARNING (EVOLUTION FROM ONE TERM TO ANOTHER)

In the evolution of terms for *lifelong learning*, how the word *learning* replaced *education* is fascinating.

Although the semantic difference between the two terms has often been emphasized in academic circles, Maren Elfert points out how few people have paid attention to the French version of the Delors Report (see [PART ONE of this Report](#)) which used the term *education*. In contrast, in the translation into English (and from this into Spanish), the term was replaced by *learning*. The reason for this inconsistency, Elfert argues, lies in the absence of an equivalent word in French for the term *learning* (in that language, the word *apprentissage* is related to the old pedagogical concept of formation).¹¹⁶

According to Elfert, the continuous use of the term *learning* during the Declaration of the Second International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA II), organized by UNESCO in 1960, marked the beginning of what Biesta calls the "*learnification*" of education, which was nothing more than a position of resistance to the traditional forms associated with the concept of education, which was hierarchical and based on the authority of the teacher.¹¹⁷

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Community education is a form of [liberal adult education](#) that has gained tremendous popularity in the United Kingdom, particularly in Scotland, where it continues under *Community Learning and Development*.¹¹⁸

The concept has two primary meanings: on the one hand, that of an education given to people within the community so that they can work for the benefit of the people, and on the other, that of a liberal education of adults of an extramural nature.¹¹⁹

Extramural courses are those organized for people who are not full-time members of a university or other educational establishment.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Jarvis explains that continuing education was previously called "further education," a term that did not have the connotations of *institutionalizing educational rights* that the term *continuing education* does.

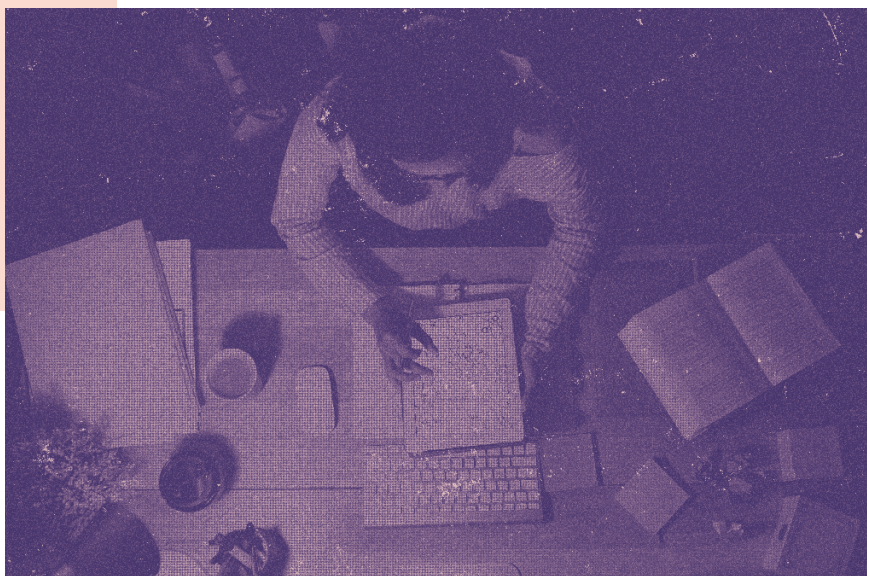
Continuing education combines both vocational and non-vocational education. However, the vocational part has been gaining ground, and the terms "continuing professional education" and "continuing professional development" have become popular, predominating in recent years over non-vocational forms.

¹¹⁶ Elfert, 2018, p. 177

¹¹⁷ Biesta cited in Elfert, p. 86

¹¹⁸ Jarvis, P. (2007). *Globalization, Lifelong Learning and the Learning Society Sociological Perspectives*. Routledge

¹¹⁹ Jarvis, 2007, p. 66





LIBERAL EDUCATION VS. CONTINUING EDUCATION

Jarvis points out that in most Anglo-Saxon countries (except the United States) when people talk about adult education, they generally refer to “liberal adult education.” The British teacher and philosopher Anthony C. Grayling clarifies the term for us: “*Liberal education* aims to produce people who can continue learning after they have finished their formal education; people who think, ask, and know how to find answers when they need them... *Liberal education* means education that includes literature, history, and appreciation of the arts, giving them the same status as scientific and practical subjects.”¹²⁰ Instead, “continuing education” meant something more formal, specialized, and vocational.

In the United States, *adult education* encompassed both liberal and vocational (Jarvis mentions that any continuing or adult education showed that formal education had been insufficient).

The above is just one example of how the proliferation of concepts and terms makes defining the most important ones necessary because they share some characteristics but are not interchangeable.

CONTINUING EDUCATION / ADULT EDUCATION

According to Maren Elfert, the Anglo-Saxon concept of *adult learning* had an essential influence on the French concept of *Éducation permanente*. The literature recorded the first appearance of that Anglo-Saxon variant in 1919 when a report by the *Adult Education Committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction* in the United Kingdom emphasized the importance of the educational needs of soldiers returning from the *Great War* (the name for the *First World War* at the time) and the role of adult education in the economic recovery after it.¹²¹

In a similar role, *Éducation permanente* rose to prominence during the 1960s in French educational and government circles as an educational strategy of the postwar welfare state. Thus, the term *Éducation permanente* had already taken root in France before entering UNESCO reports. Its spirit reflected the political and intellectual climate of the time, particularly in that country, and it played an essential role in the educational reforms that emerged after the student movements of May 1968.

The term was key in UNESCO's *Learning to Be* report,¹²² in 1972. It was essentially shaped by the tension between “efficiency and freedom”¹²³ and the utilitarian global economic visions that concerned its author, Edgar Faure.

In 1973, the European Commission launched the report [For a Community policy on education](#), also known as the *Janne Report*, which included the term permanent education.

¹²⁰ ¿Qué es la educación liberal? - Revistas UIS <https://revistas.uis.edu.co> > article > download

¹²¹ Elfert, 2018, p. 85

¹²² Faure et al (1972). *Learning to be: the world of education today and tomorrow*. UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000001801>

¹²³ Elfert, 2018, p. 112



RECURRING EDUCATION

In 1973, the OECD *Center for Educational Research and Innovation* (CERI) published a report on *recurrent education*, a term defined as “a comprehensive educational strategy for all post-compulsory or post-basic education, whose essential characteristic is the distribution of education about the total life of the individual in a *recurrent* way, that is, in alternation with other activities, mainly with work, but also with leisure and retirement.”¹²⁴

Peter Jarvis points out that the concept was associated with the idea that “everyone should have the right to a free education beyond compulsory schooling.”^{125 126} However, he adds that it was so expensive to implement this kind of “paid educational leave” that it was not surprising that the term quickly disappeared from official reports and publications of the time.

Maren Elfert points out that despite the concept having many similarities with the current *Lifelong Education*, the main difference is that the former proposed an intermittent education for adults with a robust utilitarian approach. In contrast, the latter proposes a permanent education for all age groups with formal, non-formal, and informal learning.¹²⁷

The term *recurrent education* was used and promoted above all by the *Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development* (OECD), which defines it as “a comprehensive educational strategy for all post-compulsory or post-basic education, whose essential characteristic is the distribution of education on the total life of the individual in a recurring manner, that is, alternating with other activities, mainly with work, but also with leisure and retirement.”¹²⁸

Jarvis points out that one of the connotations of *recurrent education* is that all individuals should have, by right, the opportunity to continue their education free of charge beyond compulsory schooling. Nonetheless, while good, this idea was expensive, and unsurprisingly, its use quickly disappeared.

The OECD did not propose the concept of *recurrent education* as an alternative to *lifelong education* but rather as its precursor. *Recurrent education* was devised from the beginning “as a planning strategy for introducing the concept of education throughout life.”¹²⁹

¹²⁴ CERI cited in Elfert, 2018, p. 133

¹²⁵ Jarvis, P. (2007). *Globalization, Lifelong Learning and the Learning Society Sociological Perspectives*. Routledge <https://www.routledge.com/Globalization-Lifelong-Learning-and-the-Learning-Society-Sociological/Jarvis/p/book/9780415355438>

¹²⁶ Jarvis, 2007, p. 65

¹²⁷ Elfert, 2018, p. 133

¹²⁸ OECD. (1973). *Recurrent Education: A Strategy for Lifelong Learning*. (p. 16) Centre for Educational Research and Innovation.

¹²⁹ Tuijnman, A., & Boström, A.-K. (2002). *Changing Notions of Lifelong Education and Lifelong Learning*. *International Review of Education*, 94-110.

INFORMATION SOCIETY AND KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

Information society and *knowledge society* are concepts that have been heard extensively in recent years and are closely related to *lifelong learning*. They are often incorrectly used synonymously. UNESCO advised in 2005 about the importance of separating them:

*Although we are witnessing the advent of a global information society in which technology has surpassed all expectations regarding the amount of information available and the speed of its transmission, we still have a long way to go to access actual knowledge societies.*¹³⁰

With a critical vision, Peter Jarvis distinguishes them as follows: information societies use advanced technology to transmit knowledge, while knowledge societies use it as a resource for production.¹³¹ Thus, the following definitions arise:

INFORMATION SOCIETY

It uses advanced technologies to transmit knowledge/information within itself and/or to other societies.

KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

It uses specific forms of knowledge to function or produce goods. Sometimes, the term *Knowledge economies* refers to this type of society.

These terms are often interchanged because the definition many dictionaries give of *knowledge* relates to information or learning.¹³² The Oxford Dictionary, for example, defines *knowledge* as “information, understanding, and skills obtained through education or experience.” The Cambridge Dictionary defines knowledge as “understanding or information about a subject obtained by experience or study.”

Therefore, it is unsurprising that the words *knowledge*, *information*, and *learning* are used interchangeably when talking about the *information society*, *knowledge society*, and *learning society*.

¹³⁰ UNESCO. (2005). *Towards knowledge societies: UNESCO world report*. (p. 19). UNESCO

¹³¹ Jarvis, 2007, p. 77

¹³² Jarvis, 2007, p. 77

LEARNING SOCIETY

A *learning society* is one in which most social institutions provide for and ensure that people develop knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs, and sensitivities per the global society.¹³³ In other words, it is a society that empowers and encourages people to learn, but (as Peter Jarvis makes clear) they must take responsibility for that learning. This definition puts learning at the center, not education, with the understanding that those who learn are individuals, not society.

The concept of the *learning society* arose in the 1960s and 1970s, primarily through the work of two authors: the educational philosopher Robert M. Hutchins and the Swedish educator Torsten Husén. The first viewed the learning society as one in which everyone would have the opportunity to learn and develop through education.¹³⁴ On the other hand, Husén thought such a society would be possible thanks to the computer revolution, making it easier for everyone to receive information and learn better. The vision of both authors was that of a new society in which time and space did not confine knowledge acquisition; that is, it was not limited to educational institutions or initial training.¹³⁵

Nevertheless, this possibility requires a certain degree of societal equity so everyone can access the same learning opportunities. For their part, Hughes and Tight suggest that the learning society is a myth, something that does not exist, and they are pessimistic about the possibility of creating one in the future.¹³⁶

If this is a utopian vision, what would align the learning society more with our reality? Jarvis proposes to look for the answer in the chapter "*Learning Pays*" of the book *Inside the Learning Society* by Stewart Ranson, in which a pragmatic and instrumental approach to

the learning society is suggested by ensuring that it *pays to learn*, (a phrase that formally translates as "it is worth learning"). Jarvis also comments that the *British Economic and Social Research Council* (ESRC) carried out a research project entitled *The Learning Society: Knowledge and Skills for Employment*, in which they assumed that the large subsidies received by research on knowledge societies were because governments and entities that invested in it expected a significant return. However, Jarvis concludes that neither Ranson's book nor the ESRC project offered empirical evidence to support such a claim.

The ambiguity of the *learning society* concept is evident since, on the one hand, we have a utopian vision (which, in turn, is related to the two founding reports of UNESCO). On the other hand, we have a vision that is much more related to the socioeconomic demands of contemporary society. "The learning society has become a contested concept in which the different meanings attached to it not only reflect different interests but also imply different visions of the future and different policies to get there."¹³⁷

133 Jarvis, 2007, p. 100

134 Jarvis, 2007, p. 101

135 UNESCO. (2005). *Towards knowledge societies: UNESCO world report*. UNESCO

136 Jarvis, 2007, p. 103

137 Coffield y Young cited in Jarvis, 2007, p. 105



2023 DIRECTORY OF AGE-INCLUSIVE UNIVERSITIES

PART III



This Directory is the result of research carried out between 2019 and 2022 by the Observatory of the Institute for the Future of Education of Tecnológico de Monterrey. It provides valuable data on institutions, programs, and initiatives that promote inclusion, active aging, and lifelong learning in various countries. Doing this involved face-to-face and online interviews with the people coordinating such things. Additionally, some information came from each program's official websites and other sources (all referenced at the end of this report). The Directory lists the name of each initiative in alphabetical order.

The Directory has three sections: The first, entitled Networks and Countries, describes initiatives that coordinate various organizations, either within a country or internationally; the second, Universities and Institutes, provides information about individual institutions conducting activities in our subject; finally, the third section describes the work carried out by Tecnológico de Monterrey (TEC) in lifelong learning.

The information we share in this Directory is not exhaustive (the length available for the Directory would not have allowed us to include all the worldwide initiatives). For this reason, we chose some of the most representative among those that promote a humanistic and holistic approach and value lifelong learning beyond professional training, promoting intergenerational inclusion and encouraging active aging.



INTRODUCTION AGING OF THE WORLD POPULATION

The concept of life expectancy is used throughout the world as a measure of the general level of mortality of a population.¹³⁸ According to World Health Organization (WHO) data, the global average life expectancy increased by more than six years between 2000 and 2019 (from 66.8 years to 73.4 years, respectively).³⁹ Healthy life expectancy (HALE) also grew by 8% (from 58.3 to 63.7). For its part, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) indicates that life expectancy has increased over the last 50 years in all its member countries, with an average life expectancy at birth of 81 years (83.6 for women and 78.3 for men),¹⁴⁰ according to the latest data available, that is, that of 2019.

The OECD also warns that progress slowed in 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic caused life expectancy to fall in most member countries, with an average decrease of 0.6.¹⁴¹ However, although the ravages of the pandemic on health are evident, there is no doubt that with the increase in life expectancy that we have experienced as humanity in recent decades, the world population has “aged.”

Megatrends

The aging of the population is today a global phenomenon and one of the four “megatrends”¹⁴² identified by the United Nations Organization:

- Population growth
- Population aging
- Urbanization
- International migration

138 Ibid

139 For more information visit: GHE: Life expectancy and healthy life expectancy. World Health Organization (WHO). <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/mortality-and-global-health-estimates/ghe-life-expectancy-and-healthy-life-expectancy>

140 OECD. (2021). *Health at a Glance 2021*. OECD Publishing. https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/health-at-a-glance-2021_ae3016b9-en

141 Ibid

142 United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. (2019). *World Population Ageing 2019: Highlights*. United Nations. <https://www.un-ilibrary.org/content/books/9789210045537>

A decline in fertility and an increase in longevity have led to a growing number of older people, a phenomenon called the “silver tsunami.” The elderly population is growing by leaps and bounds around the world. In 2019, the number of people over 60 was one billion, according to data from the World Health Organization, which estimates that this number will increase to 1.4 billion by 2030 and 2.1 billion by 2050. For its part, the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, in the report [World Population Ageing 2019: Highlights](#), points out that worldwide, the proportion of the population aged 65 or over increased from 6% in 1990 to 9% in 2019, and expects that proportion to grow to 16% by 2050 when one in six people globally is expected to be 65 or older. The same report indicates that, by the end of this century, 61% of the world population will be people over 65. It also estimates that, globally, a person 65 years old between 2015 and 2020 will enjoy an additional 17 years of life expectancy, on average. By 2045-2050, that number will have risen to 19 years.

Regarding “aging” by region, the same report predicts that by 2050, more than half of the population aged 80 and over will live in East and Southeast Asia, followed by Europe and North America. For its part, the fastest increase in the number of older people is expected in North Africa and Western Asia, from 29 million in 2019 to 96 million in 2050 (an increase of 226%).

While the aging of the world’s population can be seen as a “human success story”¹⁴⁴ and a reason to “celebrate the triumph of public health, medical advances, and economic and social development,” these demographic changes will pose significant challenges for all human beings. Preparing for the transformations associated with the aging of the world population will be critical in the coming years.

→ OLD AGE DEPENDENCY

Among the challenges that population aging will bring, the most common -according to demographers- is the old age dependency ratio, which is equal to the number of people aged 65 and over divided by the number of people aged 20 to 64. This measure is often used as a benchmark for the economic dependency of the elderly population. The case of China is a prime example to demonstrate the magnitude of the challenge. In this country, the one child per couple policy, which was in force from 1979 to 2016, contributed to a demographic imbalance, resulting in the 4-2-1 phenomenon, in which a child is responsible for caring for two parents and four grandparents¹⁴⁵. The World Health Organization [predicts](#) that by 2050, the number of older people who cannot fend for themselves will multiply by four in developing countries.¹⁴⁶ It is crucial to consider that as people live longer, the probability of suffering diseases of the elderly and geriatric syndromes such as dementia, Alzheimer’s, arthritis, hearing problems, or some other type of cognitive deterioration increases; it also significantly increases the risk of falls and broken bones that prevent people from moving on their own.

In this context, the aging of the population will affect all aspects of society, including labor and financial markets, the demand for goods and services such as education, housing, health, transportation, and social protection, and the care economy.

143 World Health Organization. https://www.who.int/health-topics/ageing#tab=tab_1

144 United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. (2019). *World Population Ageing 2019: Highlights*. United Nations. <https://www.un-ilibrary.org/content/books/9789210045537>

145 Véase *Why universities for the elderly are booming in China*. The Economist. (2018) <https://www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2018/08/16/why-universities-for-the-elderly-are-booming-in-china>

146 Key facts about ageing. World Health Organization. <https://www.afro.who.int/health-topics/ageing>

→ OLD AGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

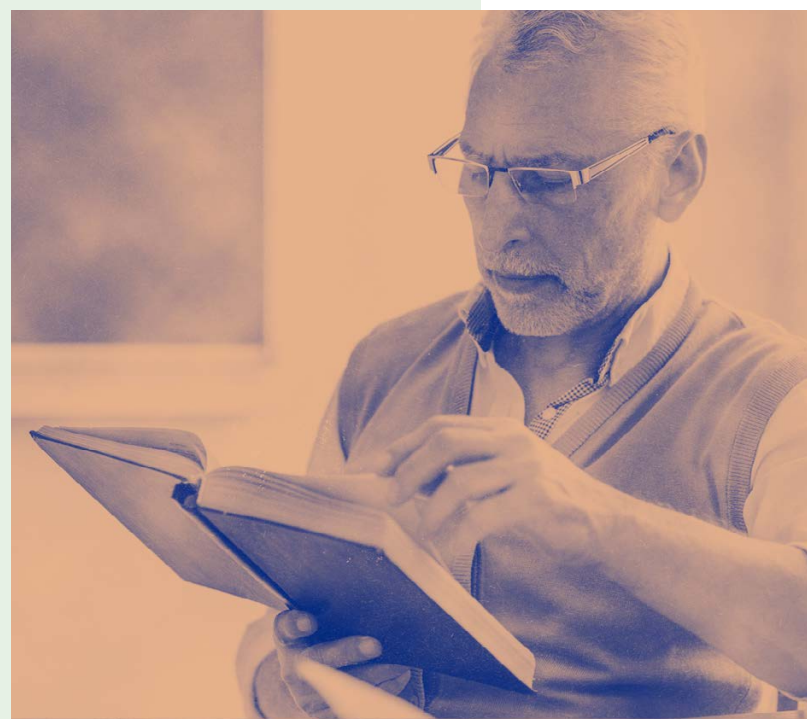
Preparing for the aging of the world population will also be essential to ensure the achievement of the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) included in the [United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). According to this organization, longevity trends will significantly impact at least six of the SDGs: No poverty (SDG 1), Health and well-being for all ages (SDG 3), Gender equality (SDG 5), Decent work for all (SDG 8), Reduction of inequalities between and within countries (SDG 10), and Sustainable, inclusive and safe cities and communities (SDG 11).



Source: United Nations.

Lifelong Learning and the SDGs

Investing in education, health, and well-being for all people through promoting lifelong learning will be vital in achieving two major Sustainable Development Goals: Health and well-being (SDG 3) and Quality education (SDG 4). In addition, as the digital age and the post-pandemic transform jobs globally, greater emphasis will fall on such learning to achieve the goal of Decent Work for All (SDG 8).



→ ACTIVE AGING AND LIFELONG LEARNING

The World Health Organization (WHO) adopted the term active aging in the late 1990s to convey a more inclusive message than the previously used term, healthy aging. In 1999, commemorating the International Year of Older Persons, the WHO launched a campaign to promote active aging.

But what is this? The WHO defines it as “optimizing opportunities for health, participation, and security to improve the quality of life as people age.”¹⁴⁷ The word active refers to the opportunity to continue participating in the social, economic, cultural, spiritual, and civic spheres, and not just the ability to stay physically active or participate in the workforce, the WHO clarifies. By health, the organization refers to all people’s physical, mental, and social well-being. For aging to be a positive experience, living longer must go hand in hand with better overall health, participation, security, and well-being. Achieving this (and achieving active aging) requires considering numerous economic, social, personal, and behavioral determinants, the physical environment, and access to health and social services.



Source: *Active Active Ageing: A Policy Framework*. World Health Organization (2002).

The aging of the population is one of humanity’s greatest triumphs and one of its most significant challenges.¹⁴⁸ The challenge is such that the United Nations General Assembly declared the period 2021-2030 as the [Decade of Healthy Aging](#)), with the WHO being in charge of leading this initiative.

Healthy or Active?

The United Nations General Assembly declared the 2021-2030 period as the Decade of Healthy Ageing. Here, the question arises: why return to the term “healthy aging” if already, in the 1990s, the WHO itself had emphasized the use of a more inclusive concept, that of “active aging”? The observation is pertinent because, as we have seen throughout this report, the way we call things (the terminology we use) has a significant impact that should not go unnoticed.

¹⁴⁷ World Health Organization. (2002). *Active Ageing. A Policy Framework*. World Health Organization. <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/67215>

¹⁴⁸ World Health Organization. (2001). *Health and ageing: a discussion paper, Preliminary version*. World Health Organization. <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/66682>

What is “healthy ageing”? The WHO defines it as “the process of promoting and maintaining the functional capacity that allows well-being in old age. Functional capacity consists of having the attributes that allow all people to be and do what is important to them.” (We must point out that the phrase “to be and do what is important to them” refers to a fundamental objective which, at the same time is conceptually ambiguous).

To achieve this ambitious goal, the UN General Assembly created the [Decade of Healthy Ageing](#) (2021-2030). This global collaborative project seeks to bring together efforts from various sectors, such as governments, civil society, international organizations, professionals, academia, the media, and the private sector, to collectively improve the lives of older people, their families, and communities. These collective actions focus on four areas or spheres of action:¹⁵⁰

1. *Change our thinking, feeling, and acting about age, aging, and ageism.*
2. *Develop communities that foster the capabilities of older people.*
3. *Provide person-centered integrated care and primary health care services.*
4. *Provide access to long-term care for older people who need it.*

In addition to proposing these four spheres of action, the Decade of Healthy Ageing project created [The Platform](#) which aims to bring together educational content, resources, experiences, and knowledge related to the themes of these spheres in a single space. The Platform “is designed to be an inclusive and collaborative space where everyone can access, share and interact with all the relevant knowledge for the Decade in one place.”¹⁵¹ The people behind this initiative know that for healthy ageing to be possible, “all the people who work and fight to improve the lives of older adults, their families, and their communities require access to a great deal of knowledge.” This highly relevant knowledge is often only available to the academic community specializing in geriatrics.

As a society, we are mainly unaware and even disinterested in older people and what aging implies regarding health and well-being and the economic and social sphere. Many people reach this stage of their lives unaware that active aging exists, resigned to being unable to do anything anymore. In this sense, lifelong learning and access to knowledge are crucial to learning how to age better and understanding that education contributes to active aging. This is why lifelong learning should not be seen only to stay relevant in our working lives. (Actually, this is only a tiny part of the contributions that lifelong learning makes to society).

149 World Health Organization. Decade of Healthy Ageing 2021-2030. <https://www.who.int/es/initiatives/decade-of-healthy-ageing>

150 *Decade of Healthy Ageing*. <https://www.decadeofhealthyageing.org/about/about-us/what-is-the-decade>

151 *Decade of Healthy Ageing. What is the Platform? A Guide to Knowledge*. <https://www.decadeofhealthyageing.org/platform-guide-to-knowledge>

152 Ibid



→ BENEFITS OF LIFELONG LEARNING

Access to education and lifelong learning opportunities are critical factors in improving older adults' physical and mental health participation and security. Loneliness, social isolation, illiteracy, and educational level, among other factors, significantly increase older people's risks of disability and premature death, notes the report *Active Ageing: A Policy Framework* (2002).

Educational level is a critical factor in healthy ageing. According to data from the OECD's *Education at a Glance 2021* on average, a 30-year-old with a high school education can expect to live up to 5.2 years less than a 30-year-old with a tertiary education (university degree or equivalent).¹⁵³ For adults of working age (25 to 64, according to the OECD), death rates are almost four times higher for the least educated men and about twice as high for the least educated women compared to those with tertiary education.¹⁵⁴ This gap in inequality and access to education is decisive for life expectancy, not only because of the educational level's implications on the socioeconomic level of people but also because of the benefits that learning throughout life brings to our bodies and minds.

As we saw in the section Learning in the Social Context in the FIRST PART of this report, in adulthood, new learning experiences occur less frequently if we compare them with those of children; however, as today's world continuously changes, it forces us to learn all the time to find our place in society. Technology advances have changed how we communicate, learn, work, and interact. Thanks to the Internet, we see an enormous amount of knowledge at our fingertips and continually have learning experiences. In 2007, this phenomenon caused the pedagogue Peter Jarvis to exclaim: "Learning throughout life is now endemic!"¹⁵⁵

Nonetheless, not all people have easy access to the vast repository of knowledge that we can find today on the Internet. The digital divide became evident during the pandemic due to the lack of access to technology and because many people do not know how to use it. Digital illiteracy occurs at all ages but is even more acute in older adults who did not grow up with digital technology. As activities as fundamental as making a phone call, grocery shopping, making a bank transaction, or seeing a family doctor have moved to the digital environment, many older people have lost autonomy and have become much more dependent. The progress of digitalization of services has increased discrimination against older adults.

In February 2022, various media outlets published the story of Carlos San Juan, a 78-year-old retired doctor in Valencia, Spain. San Juan captured the media's attention for his [awareness campaign](#) about the neglect of banks to elderly people, which had the slogan: "[I am older, not an idiot](#)". Through the [change.org](#), platform, Carlos San Juan collected more than 645,000 signatures to request more humane attention at bank branches in his country. "I am almost 80 years old, and it makes me very sad to see that the banks have forgotten about older people like me. Almost everything is on the Internet... and not all of us understand each other with the machines. We do not deserve this exclusion,"¹⁵⁶ he writes on the petition page. "My head is fine. I'm not an idiot. It's just that I have Parkinson's, and sometimes I press the wrong key," he said in an interview with DW¹⁵⁷ Undoubtedly, the case of Carlos San Juan is not isolated and highlights our lack of empathy toward older people. Nevertheless, it also reveals the scarcity of courses, workshops, and training options for digital literacy focused on older adults, which allow them to feel integrated into society and be more autonomous in their daily activities.

153 OECD. (2021). *Health at a Glance 2021*. OECD Publishing. https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/health-at-a-glance-2021_ae3016b9-en

154 *Ibíd*

155 Jarvis, 2007, p. 5

156 Tengo 78 años y me siento apartado por los bancos. ATENCIÓN HUMANA EN SUCURSALES BANCARIAS. <https://www.change.org/p/tengo-78-a%C3%B1os-y-me-siento-apartado-por-los-bancos-todo-es-por-internet-y-no-todo-el-mundo-se-maneja-pido-atenci%C3%B3n-humana-en-las-sucursales-bancarias-bbva-caixabank-bankinter-santander-resp-sabadell-help-cabk-responde-bbvaresponde-es>

157 Un jubilado español se rebela contra los bancos *online* y la discriminación de adultos mayores. <https://www.dw.com/es/un-jubilado-espa%C3%B1ol-se-rebela-contra-los-bancos-online-y-la-discriminaci%C3%B3n-de-adultos-mayores/a-60705473>

01 NETWORKS AND COUNTRIES

→ SENIOR'S LEARNING IN THE DIGITAL SOCIETY - ERASMUS+

The [Senior's Learning in the Digital Society \(SeLiD\)](#) project integrates the participation of eight European universities¹⁵⁸, under the coordination of the Comenius University of Bratislava and its Center for Continuing Education.

Its main objective is to disseminate open education and innovative practices in the digital age among older adults. The starting point is the awareness that, to exercise active citizenship, this population sector increasingly needs education and special training in using digital technologies and information and communication technologies (ICTs). Personal communication and innumerable government, health, and banking procedures are carried out today over the Internet; however, many adults do not have the necessary skills to perform them and even fear digital operations. Therefore, SeLiD focuses on improving and expanding high-quality learning opportunities for older adults in these areas.

Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership

SeLiD was approved by the Erasmus+ program of the European Union as one of its Strategic Associations for 2019-2021.

More information?

<https://cdv.uniba.sk/en/university-of-the-third-age/about-us/>



→ ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DES UNIVERSITÉS DU TROISIÈME ÂGE (INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITIES FOR THE THIRD AGE)

The International Association of Universities for the Third Age (AIUTA, from its name in French), created in the 1970s, brings together universities for the third age (U3A) from all continents.

AIUTA seeks to defend older people's right to permanent training by offering programs for older adults, exchanges between universities, and innovations in pedagogy and research related to active aging and lifelong learning.¹⁵⁹

The association has a presence in more than 50 countries.

The president of AIUTA is Professor François Vellas from the University of Toulouse, son of Pierre Vellas, founder of the first U3A.

¹⁵⁸ For more information about the Senior's Learning in the Digital Society (SeLiD) project, visit: <https://selid.efos-europa.eu/>

¹⁵⁹ For more information about AIUTA, visit: <https://aiu3a.org/about.html>

Its goals are:¹⁶⁰

- Federate throughout the world Universities of the Third Age and organizations that unite, under other names, these same objectives.
- Constitute an international framework of education and research actions throughout life for, by, and with older people.
- Promote the transfer of knowledge available to the elderly population to benefit society.

AIUTA currently offers [online courses](#) on various topics of interest to older people who are part of it or a university for the third age. Topics range from computers to aromatherapy and learning the Portuguese language.

More information?

<https://www.aiu3a.org/v2/index-es.html>

→ CHINA

China has the most significant number of inclusive programs for older adults, not only due to its territorial extension, population, and life expectancy, but also to a particular interest in including the increasingly growing older adult population in university programs for lifelong learning and care for the elderly.

A LITTLE HISTORY

The Third Age College movement began in China in the 1980s, about the same time as in the UK and ten years after France. The first Universities of the Third Age were created exclusively for retired civil servants. The first one opened in Shandong province in 1983, and it is not only the oldest but also one of the largest in the country, with 19,000 students.¹⁶²

In 1996, the government enacted a law to give older people the right to receive continuing education by opening the Universities for the Third Age to the public.

In 2010, the National Plan for the Reform and Development of Education in the Medium and Long Term ruled that education for older adults should be officially incorporated into the national education system.¹⁶³

THE PRESENT

In 2016, the party and the state approved the Education Development Plan for the Elderly (2016-2020), establishing that this population is “a valuable asset of the country and society.”¹⁶⁴

Older people are “a valuable asset of the country and society.”

The Chinese government proposed to expand the educational offerings for older adults to improve their quality of life and promote social inclusion. To achieve this, the Plan also established that all cities (urban and rural) have at least one university for older adults. Considering the country's territorial extension, this initiative seeks that older adults can find learning opportunities in their locality without traveling.

The objective is also to enable other educational institutions, such as libraries, art galleries, cultural centers, stadiums, and community schools, especially in the country's most remote areas.

¹⁶⁰ About the objectives of the AIUTA: <https://aiu3a.org/about.html>

¹⁶¹ Vellas, F. Curricula of the Universities of the Third Age. Working Paper No. 8. AIUTA - Association Internationale des Universités du Troisième âge. <https://www.aiu3a.org/pdf/Paper8.pdf>

¹⁶² Ibid

¹⁶³ Guan Hong, T. (2017, January). Lifelong Learning for Seniors, by Seniors. Urban Solutions (10), pp. 68-73. <https://www.clc.gov.sg/research-publications/publications/urban-solutions/view/issue-10>

¹⁶⁴ Development Plan for the Education of the Third Age. (2016-2020). <http://www.scio.gov.cn/32344/32345/33969/35327/xgzc35333/Document/1495018/1495018.htm>



In addition, the Plan launched the Open University for the Elderly, which offers courses through national radio and television, as well as the Senior Online University, both intending to satisfy “the spiritual, cultural and learning needs of the elderly,”¹⁶⁵, opening up learning opportunities and social inclusion for them not only in person but also remotely.

Impressive figures

According to the article [Educational Standards of the University for The Elderly](#) published in 2018, China then had 74 provincial universities for the elderly with 310,000 students, 460 municipal universities for older adults, 1.35 million students, 2,255 prefectural schools, with 1.6 million seniors enrolled, and tens of thousands of rural universities with nearly 4 million senior students.

This makes China one of the countries with the most schools and inclusive programs for older adults.

*As of 2018, China had over 70,000 senior colleges, with more than 8 million students enrolled.*¹⁶⁶

A COMMON PURPOSE FOR EVERY COUNTRY

In China, the educational offerings for older people vary from one university to another; however, the purpose of education for older adults and its philosophy of lifelong learning is the same throughout the country: to offer educational opportunities for older people to increase their sense of belonging and happiness, improve their quality of life through active aging, and become “leaders of family harmony, builders of social civilization, and disseminators of traditional culture.”¹⁶⁷

May older adults increase their sense of belonging and happiness, improve their quality of life, and become leaders!

Like the UK’s Universities of the Third Age (U3As), China’s third-age education does not pursue vocational training or focus on obtaining certifications. Its objective is the enrichment of life through learning, the promotion of physical and mental health, and the inclusion of older adults in the community. Its spaces are for relaxed and flexible teaching, focusing on culture and leisure.¹⁶⁸

The main difference with the West

According to Professor François Vellas, one of the most significant differences between Chinese and Western Universities for the Third Age¹⁶⁹ is that academic subjects are not valued as highly in the former. In general, few academic courses are offered in China as older people are more interested in practical classes where they can learn a new skill, such as pottery and ceramics, or develop their memory and improve their health.

TWO EXAMPLES

Unlike their American or European counterparts, Third Age Universities in China have little or no relationship with public universities, so most are small and do not have a website that allows access to their information. Furthermore, those with a website do not offer translated versions of Mandarin Chinese. For this reason, in this directory, we address the two most important because they facilitate access to their information.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid

¹⁶⁶ Xiong, F. (2018). Educational Standards of the University for The Elderly. Standards of Education among U3as and the Intergenerational Formation. https://selid.efos-europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Using_Technology_to_Motivate_Senior_Stud-2.pdf

¹⁶⁷ Ibid

¹⁶⁸ Ibid

¹⁶⁹ Vellas, F. Curricula of the Universities of the Third Age. Working Paper No. 8. AIUTA - Association Internationale des Universités du Troisième Âge. <https://www.aiu3a.org/pdf/Paper8.pdf>



→ LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTES / UNITED STATES

The organizations known today as Lifelong Learning Institutes (LLIs) (formerly Institutes for Learning in Retirement –ILRs–, that is, Institutes for Learning in Retirement) were born more than fifty years ago in the United States. The first LLI was created in 1962 in New York City by Professor Hyman Hirsch and a group of colleagues interested in continuing learning after retirement¹⁷⁰ and was named the Institute for Retired Professionals. Its creation came about through sponsorship by the New School for Social Research (now known as the New School University).

It was a pioneering and visionary program designed to “address the need to avoid the transition from full-time work to a traumatic state of unstructured time in retirement.”¹⁷¹ The initiative was highly successful due to its peer-to-peer teaching and learning model, becoming exemplary for many of the older adult learning programs created over the next decade.

Following an approach similar to that of the Universities of the Third Age (U3A), the philosophy of the ILRs did not follow the principles of continuing education; professional development was not one of their goals, nor was earning academic credit or certifications. The objective was to provide a space for retired seniors who wanted to continue learning for the sake of learning.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the concept of education for retired adults was still little known in American universities. One of the first to venture into creating educational programs for older adults was Harvard University. In the book *The Third Age at Harvard: A Personal History of the Harvard Institute for Learning in Retirement* (Xlibris, 2021), Michael Shinagel, who had been dean of Harvard's Division of Continuing Education and University Extension, tells the story of how the Harvard Institute for Learning in Retirement (HILR) was created in 1977.



Founded and chaired by Shinagel himself until his retirement in 2013, it was followed by the Duke Institute for Learning in Retirement (DILR), an initiative of the Duke University School of Continuing Education and the Duke Center for Studies on Aging and Human Development, also in 1977. 1980 saw the creation of the PLATO Society of the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), followed by the Center for Retirement Learning at the University of Connecticut in 1981, and in 1982, the Institute for Retirement Learning at American University.

Three years later, in 1985, nearly 50 such programs were already in the United States.¹⁷² In 1988, thirty Institutes for Retired Professionals collaborated with Elderhostel, Inc. to form an association known as the Elderhostel Institute Network (EIN), which intended to support the creation of more institutes for seniors and retirees throughout the country. By the late 1990s, the EIN had created more than 200 ILRs.

¹⁷⁰ Shinagel, M. (2021). *The Third Age at Harvard: A Personal History of the Harvard Institute for Learning in Retirement*. Bloomington: Xlibris Corp.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*

¹⁷² Lifetime Learners Institute at Norwalk Community College. Introduction to LLI. <https://lifetimelearners.org/introduction-to-lli/>



According to Nancy Merz Nordstrom, program manager for the Elderhostel Institute Network and author of *Learning Later, Living Greater: The Secret for Making the Most of Your After-50 Years*, each ILR (Institute for Learning in Retirement) had characteristics according to the particular needs of its community; nevertheless, they all shared three aspects:¹⁷³

1. They were sponsored or supported by a host university or community college to ensure academic integrity and to provide members with the benefits of a university campus.
2. They encouraged older adult students to “own” their institute by becoming members and paying maintenance dues.
3. Participation would always be voluntary, which would help develop a true sense of community.

Forty years after the creation of the first Institute for Learning in Retirement, the movement had already consolidated in the country. Seeking independence, many institutes canceled their affiliation with the EIN, forcing this association to transform.¹⁷⁴ By 2010, when 4 million older adults had already participated in its programs, Elderhostel rebranded and became Road Scholar.¹⁷⁵

→ Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes / UNITED STATES

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes (OLLIs) offer educational programs for older adults at universities or centers of higher learning, funded by [The Bernard Osher Foundation](#). The national network of OLLIs is present in the 50 states and the District of Columbia in the USA. It is not a franchise, nor is it centralized. Each Osher Institute is unique and operates independently of its host institution.

The primary goal of the Osher Institutes is to “develop the mind and spirit for a life of purpose and human flourishing.”¹⁷⁶

... a space for retired seniors who want to continue learning for the sole pleasure of learning.

Since its inception in 1977, the Bernard Osher Foundation has provided grants and donations to universities, community colleges, and other non-profit organizations, supporting specific areas such as lifelong learning, medicine, and the arts. In 2000, the foundation began making significant financial contributions to educational programs for seniors and retirees, especially those that addressed needs not covered by standard continuing education. In 2001, the foundation awarded its first grant to the University of Southern Maine Senior College, which later became the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI).¹⁷⁷ Since then, the Bernard Osher Foundation has funded over a hundred such university programs. (To receive the grant, the university or institution must rename its program or institute with the foundation's name).

¹⁷³ Nordstrom, N. M. (s.f.). The Learning in Retirement Movement in North America. Obtenido de WorldU3A: <https://worldu3a.org/resources/ein.htm>

¹⁷⁴ Nordstrom, N. M. (). The Learning in Retirement Movement in North America. Retrieved from WorldU3A: <https://worldu3a.org/resources/ein.htm>

¹⁷⁵ Road Scholar. Our Story. <https://www.road scholar.org/about/our-story/>

¹⁷⁶ The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute Network. About. <https://sps.northwestern.edu/oshernrc/about/osher-lifelong-learning-institute-network.php>

¹⁷⁷ For more information about the Bernard Osher Foundation visit <https://www.osherfoundation.org/olli.html>

By 2022, 125 Osher Institutes for Lifelong Learning served 113,399 members in more than 340 locations nationwide.¹⁷⁸

The Bernard Osher Foundation does not list specific requirements for supporting a lifelong learning program. However, the Osher Institutes share the following standards:¹⁷⁹

- The program must have a broad repertoire of intellectually stimulating courses and educational activities for people 50 or older.
- The participants' objective should be to learn for the pleasure of learning. The focus is not to award certification or academic credit.
- Participants should be offered membership and meaningful opportunities to engage in volunteer and leadership activities.
- The program must receive strong support from the host university or institution (including a space to operate).
- The program must have a solid and stable organizational structure.

Some of the 125 US universities that host an Osher Institute for Lifelong Learning include Arizona State University, Carnegie Mellon, Colorado State University, Dartmouth College, Florida State University, Johns Hopkins University, Montana State University, North Carolina State University, Northwestern University, San Diego State University, San Francisco State University, University of California at Berkeley, and the University of Illinois.



→ NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER FOR OSHER INSTITUTES / UNITED STATES

The Bernard Osher Foundation also supports the [National Resource Center for Osher Institutes \(Osher NRC\)](#), administered since 2014 by Northwestern University. The Osher NRC is a center for convening, connecting, and collaborating for the 125 Osher Institutes for Lifelong Learning (OLLIs) network. It is not a government body but “a center of excellence and dissemination of information on effective educational programs for older adult students.”¹⁸⁰ Its objective is to “facilitate the exchange of opinions, solutions, and experiences between institutes throughout the country.”¹⁸¹

Osher NRC's mission is to support the growth of OLLIs by creating connections between them. The Center fulfills this mission through various projects and services, such as planning national conferences, webinars, and training actions for OLLI staff and volunteers and conducting research projects on lifelong learning and purposeful aging.

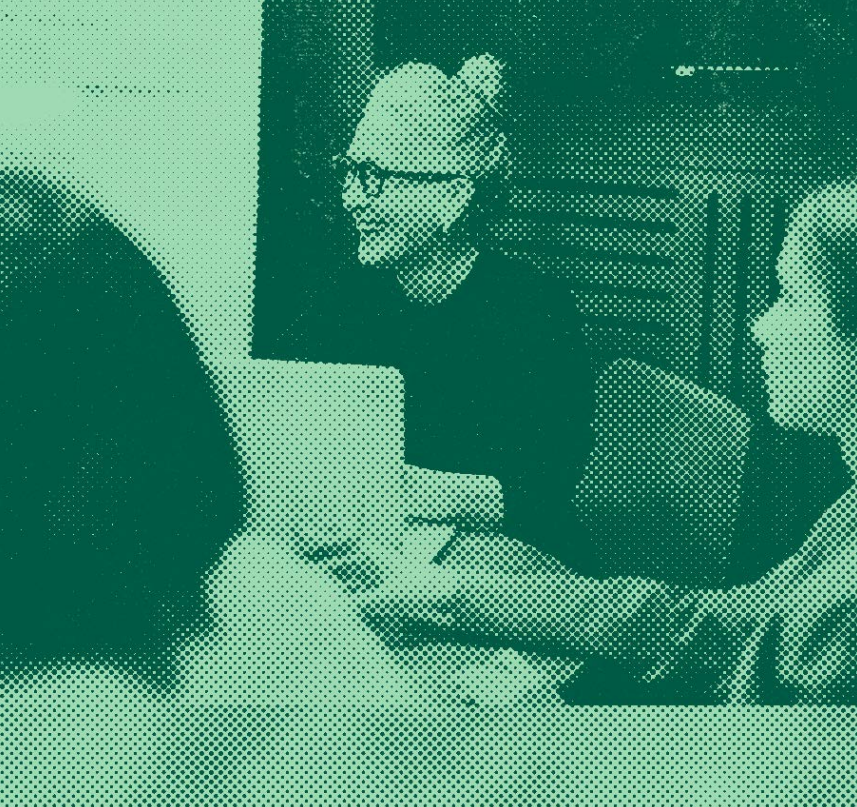
In 2018, the Osher NRC published a national directory of lifelong learning institutes.¹⁸² This [directory](#) includes all Osher Institutes as well as other independent programs. It is structured by state and city and has more than 400 programs from the Lifelong Learning Institutes (LLIs) of the United States.

¹⁷⁸ Official data from the National Resource Center for Osher Institutes. <https://sps.northwestern.edu/oshernrc/>

¹⁷⁹ Information obtained from the website of the Bernard Osher Foundation, <https://www.osherfoundation.org/olli.html>

¹⁸⁰ The National Resource Center for Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes. <https://sps.northwestern.edu/oshernrc/about/nrc-for-osher-lifelong-learning-institutes.php>

¹⁸¹ Ibid



→ UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS FOR SENIORS / SPAIN

A LITTLE HISTORY

In 1978, the Classrooms for the Third Age were born in Spain, which served as a precedent for the creation of the University Programs for the Elderly (PUMs). The initiative was so widely accepted that beginning in the 1980s, cultural movements emerged in Catalonia led by the so-called Groups of Older Persons (AFOPA, from its name in Spanish) and the old Universidades Populares (Public Universities), which had closed after the Second Republic, reappeared.¹⁸³ They all carried out training and lifelong learning activities and included older people.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the idea of opening university spaces to older adults through educational-cultural projects arose in the country. The initiative proposed that public and private universities offer extension courses, workshops, and cultural activities for this population. Under different names (University of Experience, Classroom of Experience, University for the Elderly, University for the Third Age), the first university programs of this type emerged.¹⁸⁴ Thus, in 1993, the Pontifical University of Salamanca and the University of Alcalá inaugurated a “university for the elderly” program. These later appeared in the University of Granada, the University of Seville, the University of Santiago de Compostela, the Universitat Jaume I (Castellón), the University of Alicante, and the Complutense University of Madrid. Since then, the number of universities with similar programs has increased to such an extent that in 2004, the State Association of University Programs for the

Elderly (AEPUM, from its name in Spanish) was created to coordinate the exchange of information and experiences between them.

According to the 2016 report of this State Association, entitled *Proposal for a Framework Document for the recognition of University Programs for the Elderly (PUMs)*, 60 universities nationwide had some programs for older adults.

One of the characteristics of the University Programs for Seniors is their great variety. Both the training offered and the structure, organization, and objectives of each one vary according to the university and the needs of its community. Despite this, they can be divided into two large groups:

- **Integrated programs** In this modality (implemented for the first time in 1993 at the Alcalá de Henares University), older adults can take courses together with official or “traditional” students in any of the degrees offered by the institution (even when the older adult does not meet the university entrance requirements).
- **Specific programs** The institution develops and offers a study plan designed exclusively for older adults in this modality. The University of Experience, a program of the Pontifical University of Salamanca created in 1993, was the first to operate under this modality.

These two modalities are compatible, and often, universities offer both.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² The directory can be accessed at the following link <https://sps.northwestern.edu/oshernrc/resources/lifelong-learning/us-lifelong-learning-institute-directory.php>

¹⁸³ Proposal for a framework document for the recognition of University Programs for the Elderly (PUMs). <http://hdl.handle.net/10045/70963>

¹⁸⁴ Ibid

Regarding the educational offerings and the curricula of the Programs, although the subjects vary according to the focus of each university and the demand of its students, the main topics include humanities, health sciences, social sciences, experimental sciences, and technology.

In addition to compulsory and elective subjects, complementary activities are significant in programs for older adults. They include excursions, conferences, workshops, visits to museums, cultural trips, and even national and international exchanges that follow the model of the Erasmus programs of the European Union.

According to [data from the AEPUM](#), in the 2021-2022 academic year (that is, during the COVID-19 pandemic), 23,712 students¹⁸⁶ were enrolled in university programs for seniors in more than 40 universities in the country, a relatively low enrollment compared to previous periods.

In 2022, the AEPUM had 49 partner universities throughout Spain and close to 24,000 students.

Eighteen years “actively contributing to the educational and cultural development of older people.”¹⁸⁷

More information?

<http://envejecimiento.csic.es/documentacion/varia/programas-universidad-mayores.html>

→ GLOBAL NETWORK OF AGE-FRIENDLY UNIVERSITIES / GLOBAL NETWORK

The Age-Friendly University (AFU) global network was created in 2012 as an initiative of former Irish Prime Minister Enda Kenny and Professor Brian MacCraith, President of Dublin City University, better known as DCU. This initiative aims to expand opportunities for access to higher education and improve the quality of life of older adults through innovative educational programs and an online education offering that allows them to access health and wellness activities, art and culture, and opportunities for civic participation.

... an offering of online education that allows them to access health and wellness activities, art, and culture and gives them opportunities for civic participation.



¹⁸⁵ Proposal for a framework document for the recognition of University Programs for the Elderly (PUMs). <http://hdl.handle.net/10045/70963>

¹⁸⁶ Statistics academic year 2020-2021 <https://www.aepum.es/listado-aepum/curso/24/listado/alumnos/>

Since then, DCU has been committed to expanding access to higher education: "Through this initiative, DCU is taking a leadership role in preparing society for the multifaceted challenges of our aging demographic. It will actively encourage seniors to enter our higher learning institutions and participate in shaping university programs. The age-friendly activities with older people are correctly oriented to promote the quality of life of our older men and women. It is truly a pioneering initiative, and I wish them the best of luck in the years to come," [said Enda Kenny](#) at the launch of this initiative on November 9, 2012.¹⁸⁸

The AFU network comprises higher education institutions worldwide that have endorsed its [ten core principles](#) and are committed to becoming more age-friendly in their programs and policies. Yet, what does it mean to be a "senior-friendly university"? It depends on the institution and its context: "Each university is a city unto itself," says¹⁸⁹ Christine O'Kelly, coordinator of the Global Network of Age-Friendly Universities at DCU. "Universities have banks, stores, residences, restaurants [...] they are, in reality, small cities."

The ten principles of the AFU network are endorsed by the [Gerontological Society of America \(GSA\)](#), which invites universities to join this network and contribute to the quality of life of a population of older adults growing annually at an unprecedented rate worldwide. "Joining the AFU network offers institutions the opportunity to learn about emerging efforts for older people and contribute to an educational movement of social, personal, and economic benefit to students of all ages and higher education institutions alike," the AGHE website notes.¹⁹⁰

10 PRINCIPLES OF AN AGE-FRIENDLY UNIVERSITY ¹⁹¹

- 1 Encourage the participation of older people in all core activities of the university, including educational and research programs.
- 2 Promote people's personal and professional development in their second half of life and support those who wish to pursue a "second career."
- 3 Recognize the range of educational needs of older adults (from school dropouts to those seeking master's or doctoral degrees).
- 4 Promote intergenerational learning to facilitate the reciprocal exchange of specialized knowledge between learners of all ages.
- 5 Expand access to online educational opportunities for older adults to ensure a diversity of avenues for participation.
- 6 Ensure that the university's research agenda is informed by the needs of an aging society and promote public discourse on how higher education can best respond to older adults' varied interests and needs.
- 7 Increase students' understanding of the longevity dividend and the increasing complexity and richness that aging brings to our society.
- 8 Improve seniors' access to the university's various health and wellness programs and artistic and cultural activities.
- 9 Actively engage with the university's retirement community.
- 10 Ensure regular dialogue with organizations representing the interests of the aging population.

¹⁸⁷ Asociación Estatal de Programas Universitarios para Mayores, AEPUM. Presentación. <https://www.aepum.es/presentacion/>

¹⁸⁸ About Age-Friendly University. Welcome. <https://www.dcu.ie/agefriendly/welcome>

¹⁸⁹ In an interview for the IFE Observatory, held in September 2019.

¹⁹⁰ For more information visit: <https://www.geron.org/programs-services/education-center/age-friendly-university-afu-global-network>

The first two universities to join this network in 2014 were the University of Strathclyde (Scotland) and Arizona State University (United States). Currently, the AFU network has the participation of more than 95 universities around the world that comply with the above ten principles. Some of these institutions are the University of Calgary (Canada), University of Manitoba (Canada), Arizona State University (United States), Purdue University (United States), University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (United States), University of California, Los Angeles (United States), Florida State University (United States), Maastricht University (Netherlands), University of Maribor (Slovenia), University of Queensland (Australia), University of Pai Chai (Co Southern Area) and Pontifical Catholic University of Campinas (Brazil).¹⁹²

The variety and diversity found in this network of universities reflect AFU's holistic approach to aging: "Each of them brings their knowledge and experience to the network," said O'Kelly in an interview for the IFE Observatory.

→ SINGAPORE

Singapore has resumed its interest in lifelong learning in recent years,¹⁹³ finding a solid basis for approaching new challenges in the historical analysis of previous efforts. For example, one of the country's first milestones in lifelong learning was the creation of the Skills Development Fund (SDF) in 1979,¹⁹⁴ a fund established through the Skills Development Levy Act to finance the training of employees and workers and improve business operations and technology.¹⁹⁵ Later, in 2001, the Lifelong Learning Endowment Fund (LLEF) was introduced to facilitate the acquisition of skills for the population and skills that would improve employability.¹⁹⁶

In 2015, the government created SkillsFuture, a movement that gives all citizens opportunities to develop skills throughout life, regardless of their stage of schooling.¹⁹⁷ This effort is considered the national push for an advanced economy and an inclusive society. With the help of the Future Economy Council (FEC), the inhabitants have the resources to master different skills from their first school years, as well as at the beginning, middle, or end of the race and in their retirement. Every citizen is valuable at any stage of their life and profession.

SkillsFuture has four main axes.¹⁹⁸

- 1 It seeks to help people make informed decisions about their education, training, and careers. The MySkillsFuture¹⁹⁹ website offers guidance on this. Its portal is affiliated with the nation's job market.
- 2 It responds to the changes of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the types of employment generated by Industry.
- 3 It guarantees recognition of skills enhancement certificates.
- 4 It promotes a culture that supports and celebrates lifelong learning in the region.

For some people, re-education and skills development are expensive, so SkillsFuture offers credits to overcome this difficulty, specifically through three complementary mechanisms:²⁰⁰

- *Opening SkillsFuture Credit provides an initial credit of S\$500 to everyone aged 25 and over.*
- *One-Off SkillsFuture Credit Top-Up provides a one-time top-up of S\$500 to those who decide on training measures to encourage this choice.*
- *Additional SkillsFuture Credit (Mid-Career Support) grants an additional S\$500 for those in career transition (i.e., people aged 40-60). As of June 2022, its members can access more courses for even more support.*

SkillsFuture works with higher education institutions while maintaining the Lifelong Learning Institute,²⁰¹ where all citizens can take specific courses and take advantage of continuing education programs in upskilling and reskilling.

The country has the vision that people dedicate their first 25 years to training for a job and spend the rest of their lives working; having people who are continually trained and continue learning will be a required characteristic of the workforce.²⁰²

191 The 10 Principles for an Age-Friendly University. <https://www.dcu.ie/agefriendly/principles-age-friendly-university>

192 To see the complete list of participating universities, visit: <https://www.dcu.ie/agefriendly/age-friendly-university-global-network>

193 Sung, J. & Freebody, S. (2017, December). Lifelong learning in Singapore: where are we? <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02188791.2017.1386090>

194 Tee, P. (2017). Future Directions of Educational Change. Chapter SkillsFuture - The Future of Lifelong Learning in Singapore. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315269955-15/skillsfuture-pak-tee-ng?context=ubx>

195 History SG. Singapore Development Fund is established Oct 1979. <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/history/events/98e1b55f-093d-4d44-b219-d51f6a38c313>

196 Tan, C. (2016). Lifelong learning through the SkillsFuture movement in Singapore: challenges and prospects. International Journal of Lifelong Education. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/308939381_Lifelong_learning_through_the_SkillsFuture_movement_in_Singapore_challenges_and_prospects

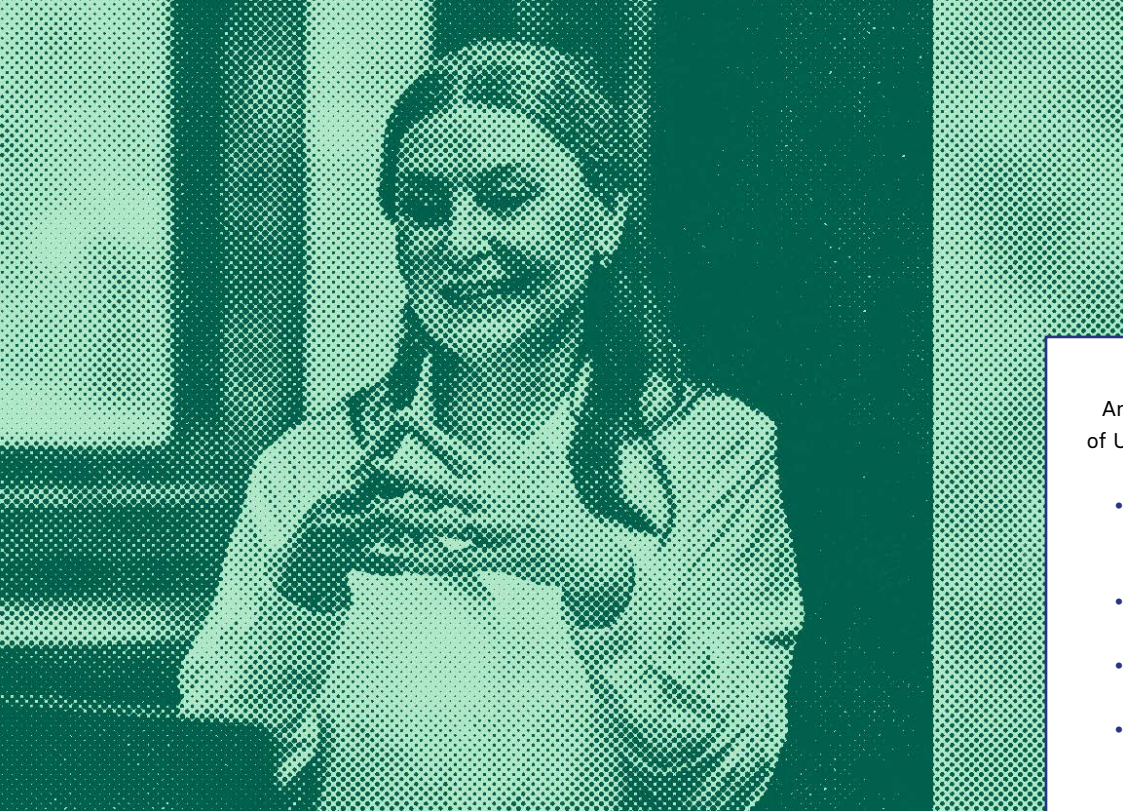
197 Skillsfuture. About Skillsfuture. <https://www.skillsfuture.gov.sg/AboutSkillsFuture>

198 Gleason, N. (2018). Higher Education in the Era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Chapter 7. Singapore's Higher Education Systems in the Era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution: Preparing Lifelong Learners.

199 MySkillsFuture. <https://www.myskillsfuture.gov.sg/content/portal/en/index.html>

200 Skillsfuture Credit. <https://www.skillsfuture.gov.sg/credit>

201 Skillsfuture SG. Lifelong Learning Institutes. <https://www.lli.sg/>



→ UNION FRANÇAISE DES UNIVERSITÉS TOUTS ÂGES (FRENCH UNION OF UNIVERSITIES OF ALL AGES) / FRANCE

In 1973, Professor Pierre Vellas created in Toulouse, the first University for the Third Age in France and the world. Professor Vellas would take the first step that year that would later promote the movement known as Universities of the Third Age (U3A). Vellas' main objective was to create a public health institution focused on applied aging research, especially improving older adults' quality of life.²⁰³ This institution would allow older adults to receive permanent training and carry out cultural activities.

Eight years later, in 1981, Professor René Frenzt created the Union Française des Universités du Troisième Âge (UFUTA) or French Union of Universities for the Third Age. Given the difficulty of defining the term "third age," the association decided in 1993 to broaden this concept to a more inclusive one, becoming the French Union of Universities of All Ages (keeping the acronym UFUTA), a name that continues currently.²⁰⁴ Starting in the nineties, the concept was extended throughout France, giving way to the creation of similar projects that

took different names: University of All Ages (Université Tous Âges, UTA), University of Free Time (Université du Temps Libre, UTL), Permanent University (Université Permanente, UP) and Inter-Age University (Université Inter-Âges, UIA).

The UFUTA is characterized by its humanist values, particularly for favoring the reception of poor populations and supporting projects that facilitate the integration of immigrants or people with disabilities.

Among the objectives of the French Union of Universities of All Ages are:²⁰⁵

- Promote the person's development regardless of age, training, or qualification.
- Promote the development of member organizations, respecting their autonomy.
- Provide extensive information about its operation, activities, and work.
- Initiate and coordinate collective actions in terms of pedagogy, research, and social action to promote the development of Permanent Education.
- Develop social ties by facilitating meetings and exchanges.
- Promote and coordinate collective activities of education, research, and social action:

1. That values older people in society.
2. That promotes better aging.
3. That drives intergenerational connections.
4. That promotes access to culture for all and lifelong learning.

UFUTA currently brings together more than 35,000 people²⁰⁵ in mainland France.

More information?

<http://ufuta.fr/>

202 Xing, B., Marwala, L., & Marwala, T. Higher Education in the Era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Chapter 8. Adopt Fast, Adapt Quick: Adaptive Approaches in the South African Context.

203 Union Française des Universités du Troisième Âge (UFUTA). Historique. <https://ufuta.fr/historique>

204 Ibid

205 Union Française des Universités du Troisième Âge (UFUTA). Missions. <https://ufuta.fr/buts-et-roles>



→ UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE / GLOBAL NETWORK

The University of the Third Age (better known as U3A or University of the Third Age) is an international movement whose objective is educating and encouraging people in the third age.

What does the term third age mean for U3A?

For the University of the Third Age, the term third age does not refer to a particular demographic group but rather to a moment in life (not necessarily chronological) in which the person can learn independently.

There is no minimum age to enter U3A; the only requirement is that the person is retired or does not have a full-time job because U3A asks its members to participate in daily meetings and activities that cannot be carried out if they have work or family responsibilities that compromise a large part of the day.

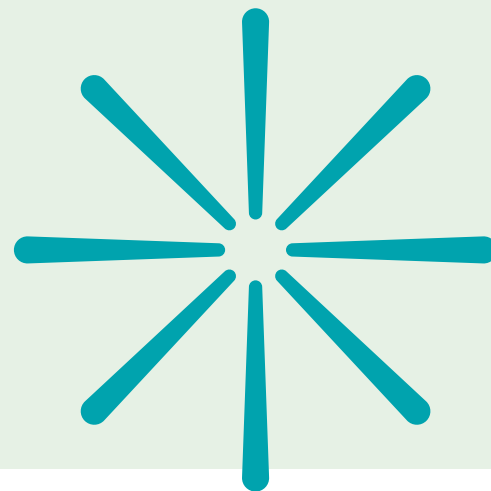
... allow seniors to meet and learn new things.

NOT EXACTLY A UNIVERSITY

Despite its name, the University of the Third Age is not a university; there are no exams or homework, and their activities are not necessarily structured in semesters. The U3A does not have "students" but members who pay an annual fee to access the courses and activities offered; members are free to choose the ones they want.

BEGINNINGS

The world's first U3A was established in Toulouse, France, in 1973 at the Toulouse Faculty of Social Sciences. International law professor Pierre Vellas started it. For its part, the first U3A in the United Kingdom was formed in Cambridge in 1982. Currently, U3A is an international movement with a presence in many countries. However, its profile is not standardized, so each government or institution can adapt or establish its principles and requirements.



Models

Although U3A is a non-standardized worldwide movement, two main models can be distinguished: the French and the British. Both have a common principle that people should learn just for the joy of learning, not to get a degree or certificate. Yet, the two models have some crucial differences, which we will look at below.

U3A FRENCH MODEL

In France, each group of the University of the Third Age is associated with an institution of higher education. This is because, in the French model, the word university refers to a link with this type of institution. In other words, if a U3A wants to be a member of the UFUTA (Union Française des Universités Tous Âges), it must be affiliated with one of them. This model is also applied in other countries, especially in continental Europe.

University affiliation opens various opportunities, such as having highly qualified teaching staff, multiple subjects, promotion of pedagogical research, the opportunity for students and teachers to conduct research based on the professional, cultural, or personal experience of older people, and so on.

U3A BRITISH MODEL

In the British version of U3A, university means people come together to learn and share new things. In Great Britain, U3A activities usually occur in community centers or members' private homes. The British model is also used in New Zealand, Australia, and the United States of America.

While research is carried out in the French model to choose the best programs for older people, such interest does not exist in the British model. The members select the courses and activities according to their needs and preferences. (A vote decides the course topics.)

CURRICULUM AND METHODOLOGY

The models for the implementation of U3A vary from one country to another. Still, the main idea is to help older people strengthen or acquire their knowledge and skills to actively contribute to the development of their country and their community.

... help older people so that they can actively contribute to the development of their country and their community.

In all countries, the themes of the courses are generally repeated (politics, entrepreneurship, languages, computer science, law, music, arts, literature, and philosophy) in the common understanding that they bring joy, well-being, and richness of thought.²⁰⁷ The depth of course coverage may vary in each country or community because U3A does not have universal standards. Each region implements the model that best suits its community and is believed to bring the best results.

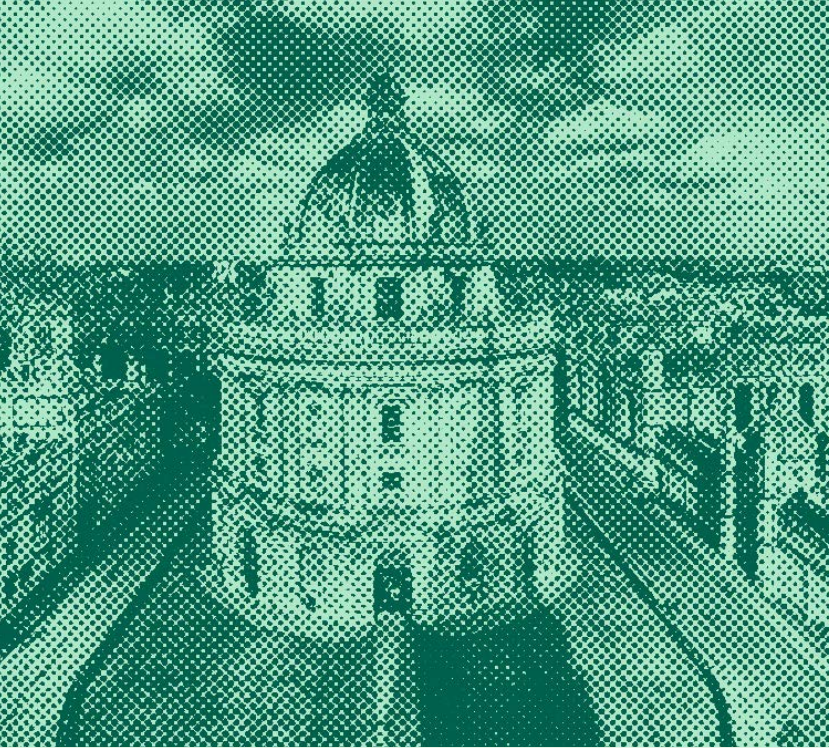
The idea of U3A is not to formalize learning or try to resemble traditional university courses.

More information?

<http://www.aiu3a.com/>



²⁰⁶ Union Française des Universités du Troisième Âge (UFUTA). Missions. <https://ufuta.fr/buts-et-roles>



→ UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE / UNITED KINGDOM

The UK University for the Third Age was founded in 1982 to promote lifelong learning and encourage senior citizens to continue to enjoy learning.

...encourage people who are in their third age to continue enjoying knowledge.

As explained in the University of the Third Age (U3A) / Global Network section of this same Directory, for the U3A, the “third age” does not refer to a particular age range but to a moment in life (not necessarily chronological) in which the person can undertake learning for themselves. Under this philosophy, there is no minimum entry age; the university is more for retired people or those who enjoy free time, either because they do not have a full-time job or are no longer raising a family.

The model of this university is characterized by the creation throughout the United Kingdom of groups managed locally. They do not have a single campus; groups have spread to Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. There are about 1,000 local U3As, 10,000 groups, and more than 430,000 members.

To belong to a group, interested people pay a membership of £10 if they are new members (for those who are already part of U3A, the cost is £5),²⁰⁸ and it is open to all those people who are in their “third stage of life” and do not have a full-time job.

The U3A is characterized by its collaborative approach, given that the colleagues learn from each other; there is no distinction between students and teachers (everyone can take turns and act as students or teachers as they wish). Under the principle that “teachers learn and students teach,”²⁰⁸ the participants take advantage of their knowledge and experience to teach and learn from each other.

“...teachers learn, and students teach”.

In this collaborative learning model, no grades or certificates are assigned; U3A members learn for the simple joy of learning. Learning is its reward.

²⁰⁷ The Origin and Purpose of The University of the Third Age. <https://www.aiu3a.com/origin-and-purpose/>

²⁰⁸ These costs are for the period 2022-2023. For more information visit: <https://u3asites.org.uk/trustu3a/page/105494>

The UK U3A is a movement governed by three fundamental principles:²¹⁰

1. The beginning of the third age

- Membership to enter a U3A is open to all third-age people. (As stated above, the third age is defined not by a particular age but as a period of life in which full-time employment has ceased).
- Members promote the values of lifelong learning and the positive attributes of belonging to a U3A.
- Members should do everything possible so that people who want to join a U3A can do so.

2. The principle of self-learning

- The members form groups and approach the subjects and activities they wish. "By the members, for the members" is the motto.
- No qualifications or prizes are sought or offered; learning is an end, with enjoyment as the primary motive.
- There is no distinction between students and teachers; they are all simply members of U3A.

3. The principle of mutual aid

- Each U3A is a mutual aid organization, operationally independent but a member of the Third Age Trust and, therefore, subject to the guiding principles of the U3A movement.
- Services provided by members to their U3A are voluntary and unpaid.
- Each U3A is self-funded by membership subscriptions, the cost of which is always kept as low as possible. U3As may seek or receive external financial support if this does not jeopardize the integrity of the movement.

Due to the restrictions imposed in the United Kingdom because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the groups and members of U3A maintained contact and activities virtually, finding creative ways to cope with confinement and social distancing and adapting to unforeseen difficulties of unprecedented magnitude.

U3A was always aware that this situation increased the digital divide and the loneliness and isolation of some members, which is why they decided to face the pandemic as a challenge and an opportunity. It was a fact that only a few members dominated video conferences and social networks, even among those who had Internet; as a result, supporting them in the face of this technological deficit could significantly increase their life skills and motivate participation, thus reducing the risk of isolation and abandonment by an increasingly connected world. Since then, U3A has sought to identify members and groups needing technology support (at minimum, training to receive and send emails).

The [U3A blog](#) has various posts on the activities carried out by the elderly members of the University for the Third Age. During the months of the pandemic, different efforts helped the U3A community to overcome the quarantine. One such effort was the creation of "stay in touch" how-to guides, written by U3A members themselves, explaining ways to navigate the digital environment, explaining, for example, how to create a Facebook group, use Zoom and Skype, listen to podcasts and make a video call on WhatsApp.

Thanks to the practical guides, I have learned to use Zoom and Teams and have been able to participate in most of my U3A groups, joining many online activities. I have made new friends...²¹¹

*Beryl
(U3A Manchester member,
which celebrated 40 years of existence in 2022)*

In this way, restrictions imposed by the pandemic became opportunities for many people. Henceforth, today, U3A offers [u3a Sources](#), a platform with resources, testimonials, and activities so that seniors can learn from home about different topics, such as art, climate change, mathematics, poetry, well-being, technology, and languages.

More information?

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/>

²⁰⁹ Nash, M. (2018). The Quality of Education Provided by UK U3A. Standards of Education among U3as and the Intergenerational Formation.

²¹⁰ The Principles of the U3A Movement. <https://www.u3a.org.uk/about/vision>



→ VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE / UNITED KINGDOM

In 2009, the Virtual University of the Third Age, also known as Virtual U3A or vU3A, was created to offer an alternative space for learning, coexistence, and enrichment to all those older people who were isolated due to their location, illness, or any restriction that preventing them from attending U3A in person.

vU3A was initially affiliated with the UK Third Age Trust but is now an independent organization. Initially, this virtual version followed the principles of U3A participatory learning, which is why it promotes the creation of informal learning and discussion groups where members can choose their topics and share their experiences. Subscription to the archive of vU3A activities is free.

More information?

<https://vu3a.org.uk/>



02 UNIVERSITIES AND INSTITUTES

→ AULAS PARA EL TIEMPO LIBRE (CLASSROOMS FOR FREE TIME) - UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE CUYO / ARGENTINA

In 1990, the Faculty of Arts and Design of the Universidad Nacional de Cuyo took the initiative to create a non-formal education program for adults over 35 years of age. With the name "Classrooms for Free Time (ATL)," this program began its activities with only seven visual arts workshops. Still, its success was such that today, more than three decades later, it permanently offers 100 seminars in various areas of knowledge to more than 1000 students.²¹²

Given the program's social impact, in 2010, it became a dependent of the Secretary of Extension and Liaison in the Rector's Office of the university.

Its mission is to "provide a space for non-formal education to adults over 35, through workshops and activities addressing different areas of knowledge such as art, culture, health, and personal development. It creates a space for recreation where knowledge and interpersonal interaction are the fundamental axes".²¹³

"... a leisure space where knowledge and interpersonal interaction are the fundamental axes".

Among its objectives are:

- Provide people over 35 with a space for growth and development of their creative and cognitive abilities, as well as contribute to their insertion and social participation and improve their quality of life.
- Facilitate their access to knowledge and training and improve skills to transform their environment.
- Stimulate the use of free time in a creative and enriching way.
- Promote solidarity, participation, and intergenerational communication of older people within their communities.
- Promote knowledge and skills in prevention and health care.
- Provide opportunities to learn and live together in a cordial, familiar, supportive environment.

As mentioned above, ATL offers more than 100 non-academic education workshops in disciplines such as singing, musical comedy, photography, yoga, languages (English, French, Italian), furniture restoration, drawing, painting, computing, crisis coaching, literature, introduction to the literary culture of Japan, personal development, history, and history of religions.

The annual registration cost for the 2022 cycle was 900 Argentine pesos, and the monthly fee for the workshops varies between 2,100 and 4,000 Argentine pesos.²¹⁴

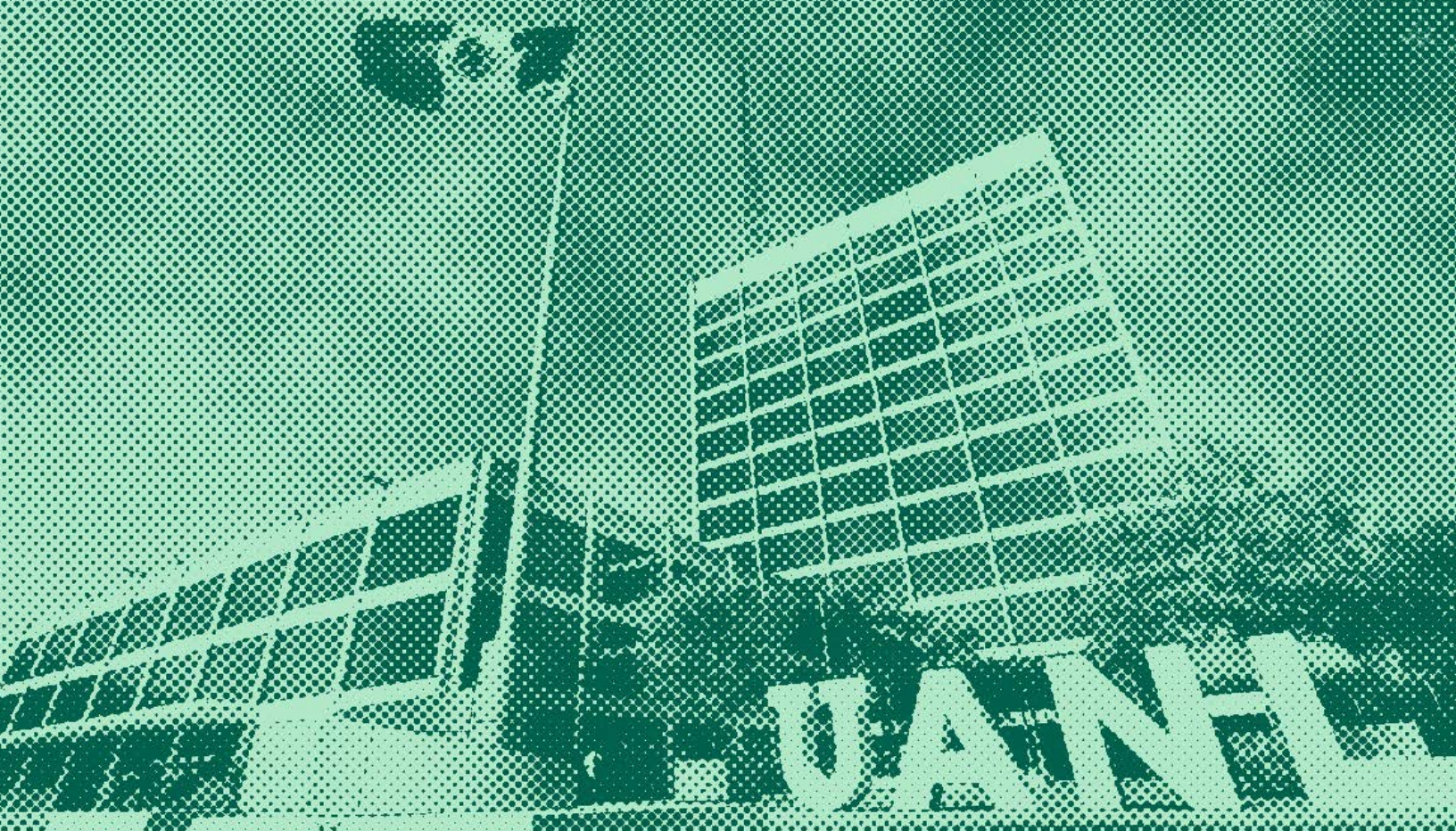
More information?

<https://aulastiempolibre.uncuyo.edu.ar/>

²¹² Classrooms for Free Time. About us? <https://aulastiempolibre.uncuyo.edu.ar/nosotros>

²¹³ Ibíd

²¹⁴ According to information on the website of the Aulas para el Tiempo Libre (Classrooms for Free Time). <https://aulastiempolibre.uncuyo.edu.ar/nuestros-talleres>



→DIPLOMADO DEL PROGRAMA UNIVERSIDAD PARA LOS MAYORES (UNIVERSITY PROGRAM FOR SENIORS) - UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE NUEVO LEÓN / MEXICO

The Diploma of the University for the Elderly Program of the Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León (UANL) -which is part of the Coordination of Educational Inclusion for People with Disabilities and Older Adults- is aimed at people aged 55 or over, who wish to continue training, or to people who for some reason could not attend the university and now want to do so.

Its objective is to offer “an education and training alternative that allows older people to develop their potential, carry out and share new social and cultural activities, and lead a healthy life. Provide older people with tools that prepare them to experience a successful aging process...”²¹⁵

“Provide older people with tools that prepare them to live a successful aging process...”

It is not an educational offering for older adults precisely, but a four-month course in which participants learn about the primary influences of successful aging and improvement in quality of life.

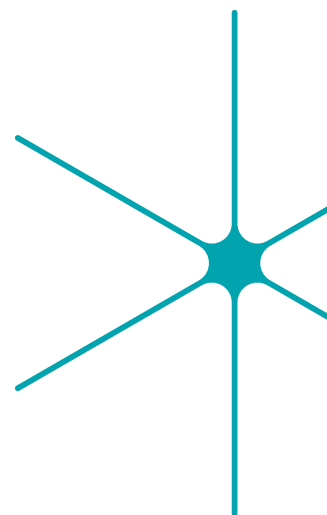
The requirements to be part of this program are:

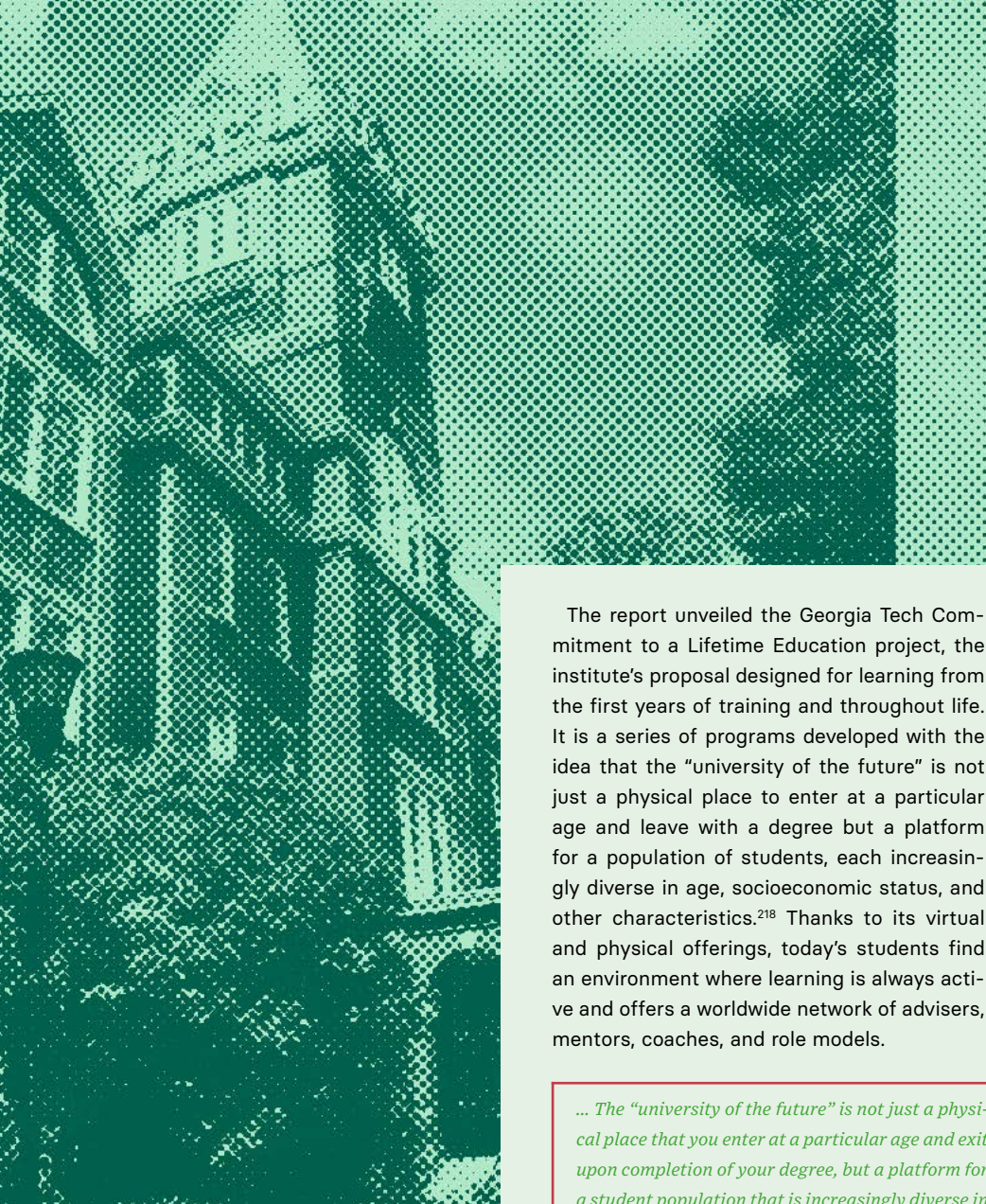
- **Age 55 or older.**
- **Literacy.**
- **General arithmetic skills.**

More information?

<https://www.uanl.mx/mayores/programa-universidad-para-los-mayores/>

²¹⁵ Diploma of the University Program for the Elderly. <https://www.uanl.mx/mayores/programa-universidad-para-los-mayores/>





→ GEORGIA TECH LIFETIME LEARNING INITIATIVE / UNITED STATES

The Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech) is a public university in Atlanta, Georgia, founded in 1885.

In late 2015, recognizing the importance of adopting new and innovative educational methodologies, the institution established the Commission on Creating the Next in Education (CNE).²¹⁶ This Commission, which analyzes the best practices in higher education and generates recommendations, issued a report in 2018 projecting a look toward Georgia Tech 2040.²¹⁷

The report unveiled the Georgia Tech Commitment to a Lifetime Education project, the institute's proposal designed for learning from the first years of training and throughout life. It is a series of programs developed with the idea that the "university of the future" is not just a physical place to enter at a particular age and leave with a degree but a platform for a population of students, each increasingly diverse in age, socioeconomic status, and other characteristics.²¹⁸ Thanks to its virtual and physical offerings, today's students find an environment where learning is always active and offers a worldwide network of advisers, mentors, coaches, and role models.

... The "university of the future" is not just a physical place that you enter at a particular age and exit upon completion of your degree, but a platform for a student population that is increasingly diverse in age, socioeconomic status, and other characteristics.

There, students can distribute their learning experiences throughout life as they see fit.²¹⁹ One of their methodologies is integrating college content into high schools to ease the transition to college.

In this way, students can take advantage of Georgia Tech when they are ready, before or after 18. Those who take early access have transferable credits, academic experiences, and flexible learning options. For those looking to extend their learning throughout life, the university provides so-called "learning pathways" that allow adults to further develop on their current career path or have a solid foundation for a career change, intending to diversify the generations and work experiences of students in the institution.

The commitment is to offer personalized options to everyone, even the cost of the courses (for example, new students can pay an annual subscription to all courses instead of a fee for each class).

To enrich their educational experience, students can combine different strategies, for example, cooperative learning with service learning and with research at the undergraduate level.

Those who decide to enter Georgia Tech can continuously renew their skills and knowledge, all outside of rigid academic calendars and in a collaborative environment that fosters the creation of social ties.

Following the launch of this strategic plan, the university created a new academic unit dedicated to lifelong learning, the Lifetime Learning Initiative.²²⁰

This academic unit will bring together Georgia Tech Professional Education (GTPE), the Center for Education Integrating Science, Mathematics, and Computing (CEISMC), and the Center for 21st Century Universities (also known as C21U). The initiative seeks to create multidisciplinary collaboration among researchers, students, and teachers at every stage of life, "from kindergarten to old age" ("from K to grey").

More information?

<https://provost.gatech.edu/lifetime-learning-initiative>

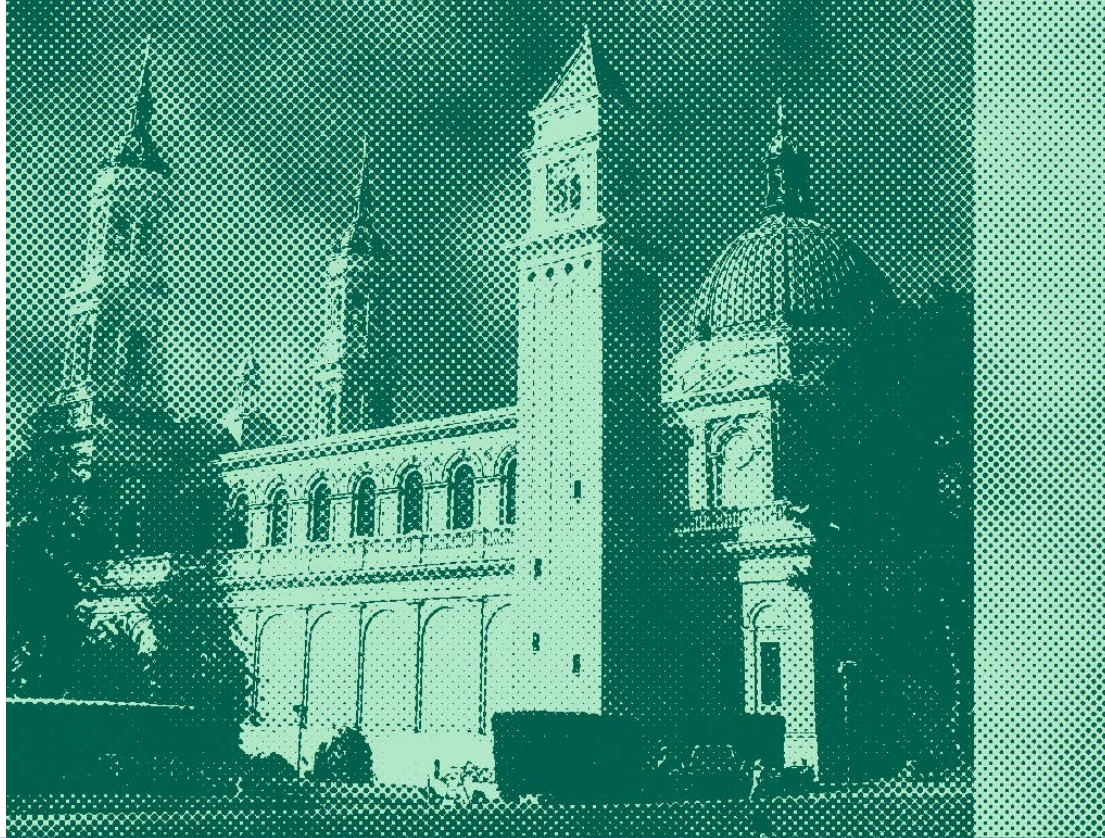
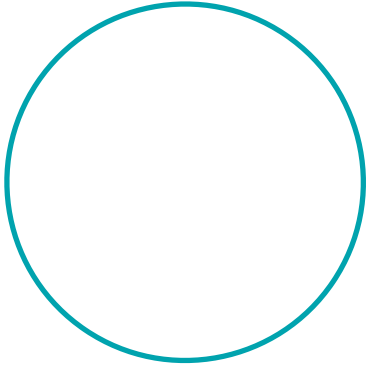
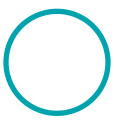
²¹⁶ Georgia Tech. CNE Home. <https://provost.gatech.edu/cne>

²¹⁷ Deliberate Innovation, Lifetime Education. https://provost.gatech.edu/sites/default/files/documents/deliberate_innovation_lifetime_education.pdf

²¹⁸ Ibidem

²¹⁹ Georgia Tech. Georgia Tech Commitment. <https://provost.gatech.edu/cne/commitment>

²²⁰ Georgia Tech. Lifetime Learning Initiative. <https://provost.gatech.edu/lifetime-learning-initiative>



→ **FROMM INSTITUTE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING - UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO / UNITED STATES**

The Fromm Institute for Lifelong Learning at the University of San Francisco is a “University within a University.”²²¹ It was founded by Alfred and Hanna Fromm in 1976 to provide an intellectually stimulating community for adults 50 and older. Their program was the model and inspiration for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes.

The only requirement to enroll is to be 50 or older. It is a non-profit program with no tuition (students pay per course and can get scholarships), no exams or grades, and no academic credit.

The institute is supported primarily by donations from the community.

Its approach is peer learning: students take classes led by emeritus professors their age. The faculty comprises retired professors from universities nationwide who are recognized experts in their fields. With no exams or grades, the learning environment is enriching, and students and teachers can enjoy the learning experience just for the learning.

With no exams or grades, students and teachers can enjoy the experience of learning just for the sake of learning.

All members can propose new courses, turning the curriculum into a dynamic and challenging experience.

The Institute offers access to the facilities and services of the University of San Francisco and the [Frommcast](#), a digital educational platform for lifelong learning that features pre-recorded classes and lectures.

More information?
<https://www.fromminstitute.org/>

²²¹ The Fromm Institute for Lifelong Learning.
<https://www.fromminstitute.org/>

→ **HARVARD INSTITUTE FOR LEARNING IN RETIREMENT - HARVARD UNIVERSITY / UNITED STATES**

In the book *The Third Age at Harvard: A Personal History of the Harvard Institute for Learning in Retirement* (Xlibris, 2021), Michael Shinagel, former dean of Harvard's Division of Continuing Education and University Extension, narrates that it was his brother, Fred Shinagel, who gave him the idea to create the HILR. Moving to New York City in 1962, Fred came to live across the street from the New School, which housed the first Institute for Retired Professionals, founded by Hyman Hirsch. Years later, in 1975, when Michael was visiting, Fred told him about the existence and activities of that institute.²²² It was when demographic changes were becoming noticeable; people were living longer, and lifelong learning was already being discussed in academic circles: "The buzzword among educators was lifelong learning," says Shinagel.

Seeing the growing interest in continuing education and a clear vision for the future, Shinagel realized that the increase in American life expectancy opened a vast opportunity for universities and institutions of higher learning. The older adult population (already referred to as "third age") now had some 20 to 30 years of active life after retirement, and the New School's pioneering program had the potential to be replicated at other universities. With this in mind, Shinagel

sought to meet with the then-president of Harvard, Derek Bok, to propose creating an institute for retirees at this university. Instead, he was greeted by Chase Peterson, vice president of Alumni Relations and Development, who somewhat skeptically demurred, "Mike, why would we want a bunch of 'oldies' at Harvard Yard?"²²³ The question took Shinagel by surprise, but knowing Peterson, he immediately knew the answer that would land in his ears: "You do realize, Chase, that this is the stage when older people write their wills, and if Harvard accommodates them with an institute of this type, they will show their appreciation through generous bequests."²²⁴ Peterson's "eyes shone." This is how the Harvard Institute for Learning in Retirement was born, which more than 40 years later continues to offer a space for learning and intellectual enrichment for those "people committed to the intensive and continuous study of the liberal arts," according to its official site.²²⁵

The members of this community are older adults, primarily experts with postgraduate studies in areas such as education, law, business, medicine, engineering, architecture, technology, and the arts. The Institute's mission is: "To foster a learning model in retirement that catalyzes active intellectual engagement and volunteer effort. Rooted in an academic curriculum of peer-led seminars, HILR seeks a diverse student population that reflects the multicultural richness of society at large."²²⁶

The members of this community are older adults, primarily experts with postgraduate studies in areas such as education, law, business, medicine, engineering, architecture, technology, and the arts.



²²² Shinagel, M. (2021). *The Third Age at Harvard: A Personal History of the Harvard Institute for Learning in Retirement*. Bloomington: Xlibris Corp

²²³ *Ibíd*

²²⁴ *Ibíd*

²²⁵ Harvard Institute for Learning in Retirement (HILR) Official Website: <https://hilrdce.harvard.edu/about-us/>

²²⁶ *Ibíd*



The Harvard Institute for Learning in Retirement is part of Harvard's Division of Continuing Education, which has four areas:

1. **Harvard Extension School** offers degrees, certificates, and on-line courses for students who want to study independently.
2. **Harvard Summer School** offers summer academic opportunities (local and abroad) for adult, college, and high school students.
3. **Harvard Professional Development:** These are short, intensive programs to develop skills and strengthen professional profiles.
4. **Harvard Institute for Learning in Retirement:** For professionals over 55 who are retired or semi-retired.

In 2022, HILR was a community of over 550 people (retired and semi-retired 55 and older).²²⁷

All the courses offered are designed by the program members, who provide feedback, guide each other with a peer-to-peer teaching and learning approach, and leverage their expertise. The classes, taught in seminar mode, bear the name of study groups, and have a maximum of 20 people. There are no tests, papers, or grades, and assigned weekly readings guide the discussion. Like other senior programs, HILR does not award certificates or academic credit; its members are there for "the pleasure of learning" and to satisfy their intellectual curiosity

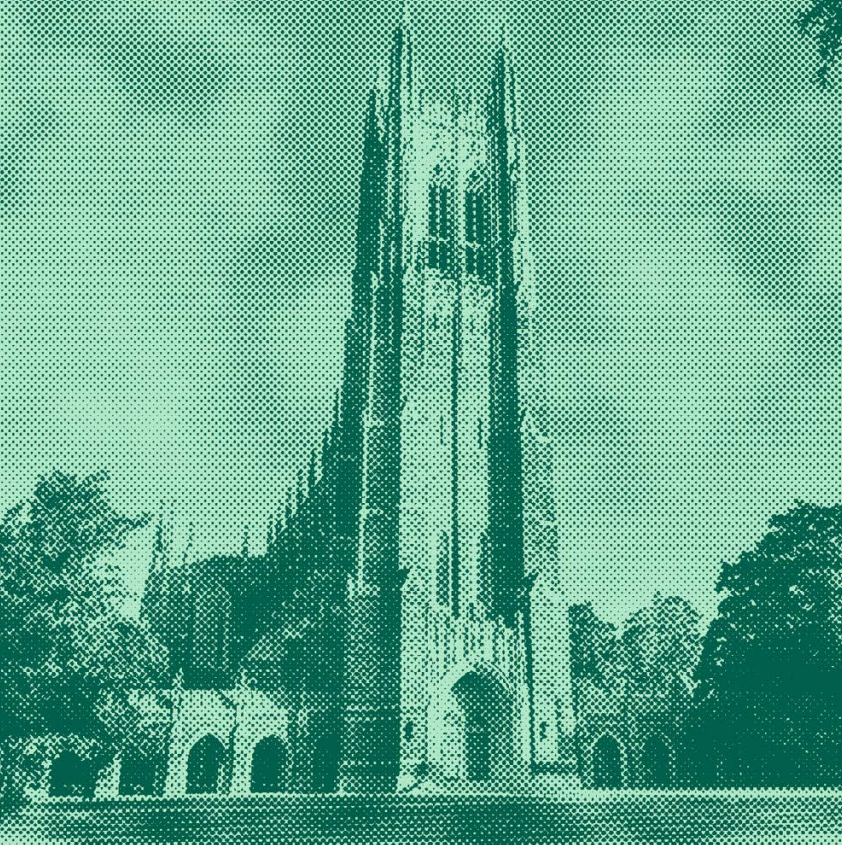
Each year, HILR offers more than 120 courses in various areas, such as art, biology, economics, geopolitics, history, literature, music, philosophy, and technology.

All courses are face-to-face and occur on campus in Harvard Square.

More information?

<https://hilr.dce.harvard.edu/>

227 Harvard Institute for Learning in Retirement. <https://hilr.dce.harvard.edu/>



→ OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE AT DUKE UNIVERSITY / UNITED STATES

In 1977, Duke University (Durham, North Carolina) created the Duke Institute for Learning in Retirement. It promotes lifelong learning and active aging through its Department of Continuing Education and the Center for the Study of Aging and Human Development.

Jean O'Barr, in those years director of continuing education, recalls an anecdote that led to the institute's creation. In the early 1970s, O'Barr met with a group of older adult students, and she commented that she was looking forward to summer vacation. One of those present replied, "[We] don't want a break. We want classes that continue all the time. Why do you think we retire?"²²⁸ This is how the Duke Institute for Learning in Retirement was conceived and born, bringing together 47 participants, and offering 12 courses.²²⁹ Twenty-seven years later, in 2004, the Institute became one of 125 Osher Institutes for Lifelong Learning with an initial \$1 million grant from the Osher Foundation. It led to changing its name to the Osher Institute for Lifelong Learning at Duke University (OLLI at Duke).

In 2022, this Institute sought to "engage minds, uplift spirits, and foster the well-being of members through a wide range of educational programs, volunteer opportunities, and social activities."²³⁰ The institute functions as a cooperative. Its members teach classes, coordinate conferences, lead discussions, organize volunteer activities and projects, serve on advisory boards and committees, act as classroom assistants, assist in data management and administration, and volunteer in all tasks. They aim to learn for the love of learning and "deepen their understanding of the world around them through study and discussion." They do not have exams, qualifications, or admission tests. The only requirement is active participation in the readings and discussions.

OLLI at Duke operates as a cooperative.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, classes were in person; however, the pandemic forced all courses to a virtual environment. Since 2022, the courses have been in both modalities.

Currently, the Institute has more than 1,600 active members and offers more than 180 courses a year. The diverse areas of knowledge include economics and public policies, health and well-being, history and literature, and arts and sciences. The profile of those who teach the courses varies; they can be university professors, post-graduate students, independent academicians, or community experts.

The membership costs forty-five dollars per year; each class costs an additional.

More information?

<https://learnmore.duke.edu/olli>

²²⁸ Mears, W. R. (2017). The Evolution from DILR to OLLI.

Obtained from OLLI at Duke - Member Website: <https://www.olliatduke.org/olli-at-40.html#mearsoc15>

²²⁹ Ibid

²³⁰ About the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Duke. <https://learnmore.duke.edu/olli>

²³¹ Ibid

²³² Ibid



→ OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE AT ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY / UNITED STATES

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Arizona State University (OLLI at ASU) is a community of learners 50+ who seek to continue learning. It was created in 1999 by the ASU College of Human Services under the direction of Professor Vincent Waldron.²³³ Such was its success that five years later (in March 2004), ASU received a grant from the Bernard Osher Foundation to create a self-sufficient institute with the goal of “helping older adults develop new skills and knowledge and thus become resources as active leaders in their communities.”²³⁴ In 2007, ASU received a standing gift of \$1 million annually.

OLLI at ASU’s mission is to “provide learning experiences and a community where older adults engage in college-quality, non-credit classes with member-led programs, on-campus learning opportunities, and pathways to public service.”²³⁵

Anyone over 50 can join the institute without taking an admission test or any other requirement; there are no exams, and the courses do not count as academic credits since the objective is to learn for the pleasure of learning.

Membership costs \$20 per semester (\$10 in the summer) and entitles members to enroll in college-quality classes, access cultural and social events, and experience an intergenerational learning community.

... live with an intergenerational learning community.

Like other institutes and universities worldwide, the COVID-19 pandemic led to classes and activities taking place virtually. Since 2022, they have continued in face-to-face, online, and hybrid formats.

More information?

<https://lifelonglearning.asu.edu/>

²³³ Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Arizona State University, Our Mission and History. <https://lifelonglearning.asu.edu/about>

²³⁴ Ibid

²³⁵ Ibid



→ OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE AT NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY / UNITED STATES

Northwestern University is a private research institution located in Evanston, Illinois.

Initially founded in 1987 as the Institute for Learning in Retirement, it changed to its current name in 2005 upon receiving a donation from the Bernard Osher Foundation.

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Northwestern University (OLLI at Northwestern) is a program promoted by the School of Professional Studies to create a learning community for older adults through "an exciting and intellectually challenging curriculum."²³⁶ It has more than 100 study groups per semester, attended by nearly 1,500 adults on the Evanston and Chicago, Illinois campuses. Its motto is "Curiosity never retires."²³⁷

... an exciting and intellectually challenging curriculum... Curiosity never retires.

Classes adopt a cooperative learning approach in two-hour weekly discussion sessions, seminar style. These study groups are designed and coordinated by Institute members and cover various topics, such as creative arts, history and government, literature, science and technology, social sciences, and civic engagement.

The programs do not have tests or grades. Members seek to learn for sheer pleasure.

In addition to study groups, *OLLI at Northwestern* offers members the opportunity to network with others through a wide range of extracurricular events that stimulate intellectual and social activity.

The subscription to the program is an annual membership, as in other *OLLIs*. Access allows the person to join several study groups, conferences, workshops, extracurricular activities, and the library and University facilities.

There are different types of membership:²³⁸

- **Prime Membership** Costs \$650 for a full academic year and \$355 for a half year²³⁹. It is for people who want unlimited access to courses and activities.
- **Standard Membership** Costs \$575 per full academic year and \$315 for half a year.²⁴⁰ Standard membership is perfect for people who want to participate in a learning community but not in all institute activities.
- **Membresía Básica:** Costs \$450 for a full academic year and \$255 for a half year.²⁴¹ It is ideal for people with part-time jobs or responsibilities that do not allow them to study full-time.
- **Trial Membership:** Costs \$205 for half an academic year²⁴² and is available to new members only. It is ideal for people who want to become familiar with the program.

²³⁶ OLLI at Northwestern. Curiosity Never Retires. <https://sps.northwestern.edu/osher-lifelong-learning/>

²³⁷ Ibid

²³⁸ Information obtained from the official page of OLLI @ Northwestern. <https://sps.northwestern.edu/osher-lifelong-learning/membership.php>

²³⁹ Costs at the time of writing this report

²⁴⁰ Costs at the time of writing this report

²⁴¹ Costs at the time of writing this report

²⁴² Costs at the time of writing this report

More information?

<https://sps.northwestern.edu/osher-lifelong-learning/>



For students enrolled in degree or continuing education programs, the 60YC allows them to remain associated with the institution for life. To do this, it divides the lifeline into different stages (“transitions”) and offers programs to acquire the required skills, such as digital skills, conflict resolution, and decision-making.

The stages/transitions are:²⁴⁶

- **Be a successful student.**
- **Find and enter a career.**
- **Be effective in the workplace.**
- **Be digitally proficient.**
- **Improve or change profession.**
- **Retire.**

→ 60-YEAR CURRICULUM - UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE / UNITED STATES

The 60-Year Curriculum (60YC) is an initiative of the University of California at Irvine (UCI), a public research institution founded in 1965. The 60YC was born in response to the need for formal education programs and training that went beyond the years of professional training. In 2022, it had a five-story facility for courses, programs, and events focused on *lifelong learning*.²⁴³

The programs adopt a learner-centered approach. Its Division of Continuing Education (DCE) supports the development of curricula that balance theory with practice and promote skills that can be used immediately and actively in daily work life.²⁴⁴

... promote skills that can be used immediately and actively in daily work.

The 60YC helps students achieve better academic results through experiential learning, case studies, teamwork, and similar activities. It also supports them in choosing the most suitable programs, classes, individual activities, job offers, and internships.²⁴⁵

More information?

<https://career.uci.edu/60-year-curriculum/>

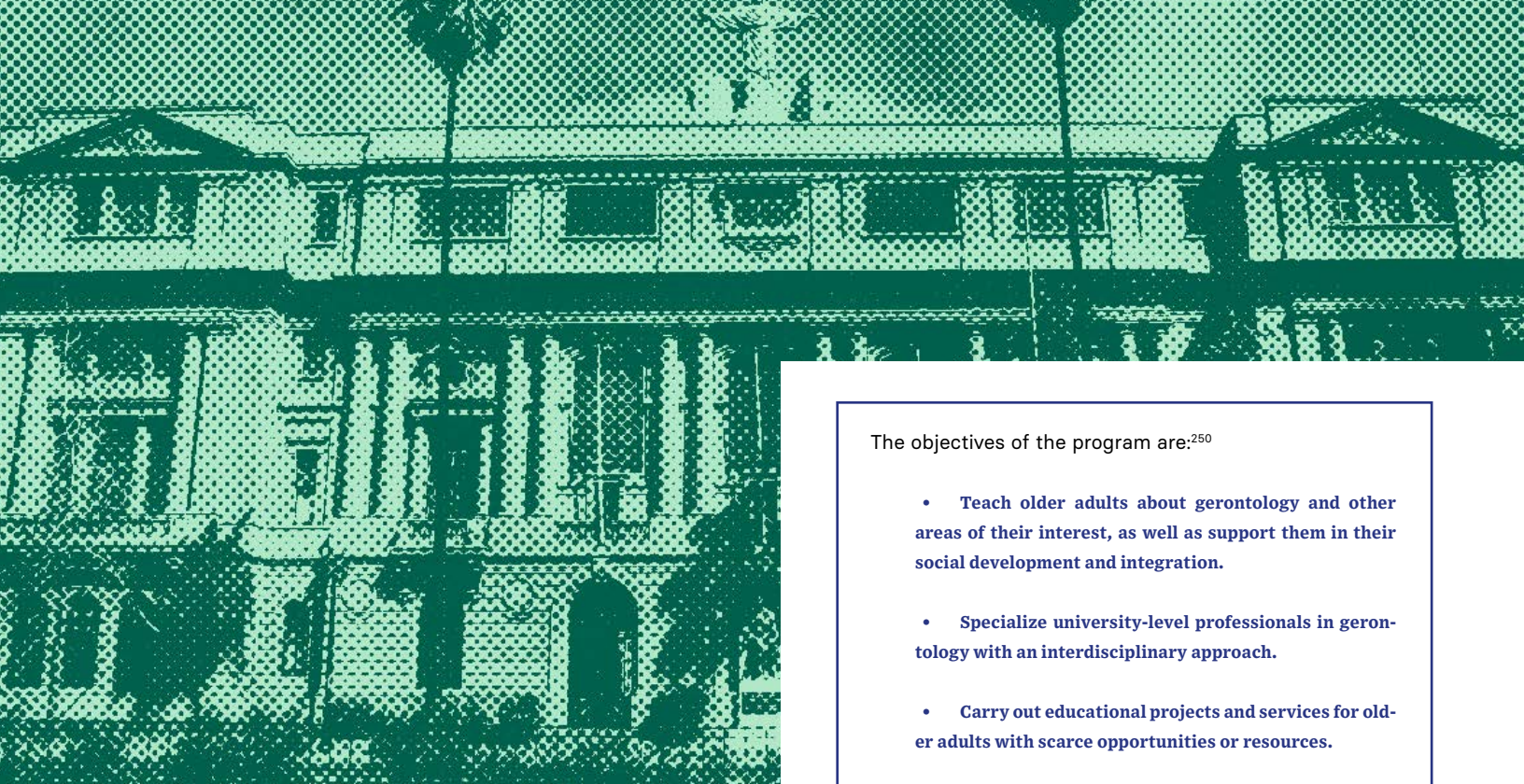


²⁴³ Patterson, J. (s.f.). The Value of the 60-Year Curriculum. Obtained from Academic Briefing: <https://www.academicbriefing.com/scholarship/the-value-of-the-60-year-curriculum/>

²⁴⁴ UCI Division of Continuing Education. Introducing the 60-Year Curriculum. <https://ce.uci.edu/about/magazine/articles/su21-60YC.aspx>

²⁴⁵ Ibidem

²⁴⁶ Ibidem



The objectives of the program are:²⁵⁰

- **Teach older adults about gerontology and other areas of their interest, as well as support them in their social development and integration.**
- **Specialize university-level professionals in gerontology with an interdisciplinary approach.**
- **Carry out educational projects and services for older adults with scarce opportunities or resources.**

→ PROGRAMA ADULTO MAYOR (SENIOR ADULT PROGRAM) - PONTIFICIA UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA DE CHILE / CHILE

In response to the accelerated aging of the Chilean population, the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (UC) created the Programa Adulto Mayor UC (UC Senior Adult Program) in 1988 to help the country “cope with the various economic, social, and cultural changes” caused by these demographic changes.²⁴⁷ These have made older adults “more present in public discourse, in the educational offerings, in daily conversation, in the creation of spaces dedicated to them, and in health programs.”²⁴⁸ The Programa Adulto Mayor UC (UC Senior Adult Program) offers these people an opportunity for vital development and empowerment through an active aging approach.

More than three decades after its founding, the program remains at the forefront of developing gerontology in Chile and aims to improve the quality of life of current and future generations of older adults. Its fundamental mission is to “develop gerontology in Chile by opening spaces for learning, interaction, and integration for older people, for those who work and care for them, and for those who study and investigate how to deal with the economic, social and cultural changes that aging brings to our society and every single senior citizen.”²⁴⁹

Scientific approach

The Programa Adulto Mayor UC (UC Senior Adult Program) is part of the Center for Geriatrics and Gerontology of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, alongside the Schools of Medicine, Social Sciences, and Biological Sciences.

To achieve these objectives, the program has four lines of action: teaching, research, social projects, and publications. In addition, it offers courses, training, social interventions, and community development projects to improve the quality of life of low-income seniors. Currently, the entire educational offering of the Programa Adulto Mayor UC (UC Senior Adult Program) is online, with various topics (European history, philosophy, cinema, literature, music, and personal development).

Currently, the entire educational offer of the Programa Adulto Mayor UC (UC Senior Adult Program) is online.

Intending to counteract sedentary lifestyles and contribute to the physical reactivation of the elderly population, on October 1, 2022, the Program presented the fifth edition of [Camina 60+](#) with virtual and on-site activities, video capsules with simple exercises to do at home, online workshops on physical fitness, wellness, self-care, technology and social networks, and recreational, social gatherings.²⁵¹

More information?

<http://adulatomayor.uc.cl/index.php>

²⁴⁷ Programa Adulto Mayor. Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. <http://adulatomayor.uc.cl/programa-am>

²⁴⁸ Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. (2011). Guía Calidad de Vida en la Vejez (Quality of Life in Old Age Guide). Herramientas para vivir más y mejor. <https://estudiosdevejez.uc.cl/recursos-ceve/guia-calidad-de-vida-en-la-vejez-herramientas-para-vivir-mas-y-mejor/>

²⁴⁹ Programa Adulto Mayor. Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. <http://adulatomayor.uc.cl/programa-am>

²⁵⁰ Ibíd

²⁵¹ For more information about the event Camina60+, visit: <https://camina-60mas.uc.cl/>

→ PROGRAMA DE FORMACIÓ UNIVERSITÀRIA PER A MÉS GRANS DE 50 ANYS (UNIVERSITY FORMATION PROGRAM FOR PEOPLE OVER 50) - UNIVERSIDAD DE GIRONA / SPAIN

In 2005, the Universidad de Girona created the Josep Torrellas University Studies Program for people over 50, intending to offer them the possibility of integrating into the university community. For the Universidad de Girona, education "is a right that must not only be protected but also expanded."²⁵² Considering the importance of lifelong learning, the Josep Torrellas Program offers new ways to access the university and promotes other forms of continuous training, not necessarily focused on professional development. (Addressing the interests of senior citizens, the program's goal is to provide a space for knowledge, reflection, and intergenerational dialogue without the objective of professionalization).²⁵³

This initiative offers around 400 subjects that comprise the curricula for 28 official degrees from the Universidad de Girona. No previous degree is required. The only condition is to be 50 years or older. Those interested can enroll in subjects of varying complexity, which they can take directly on campus with undergraduate university students; nevertheless, they do not have the same obligations since the idea is that they can enroll in some subjects just for the fun and pleasure of learning.

Those interested can enroll in subjects of different degrees, which they can take directly on campus and coexist with undergraduate university students.

In addition to degree subjects, the Josep Torrellas Program has an academic offering designed specifically for older adults. Among these initiatives are:

Actualizate" (Update Yourself) Program for University formation

These are specialized seminars in different areas of knowledge.

Specific Formation of the Social Commitment Unit

These are courses designed by the Universidad de Girona's Social Commitment Unit, sometimes with the participation of other entities. They disseminate knowledge on development cooperation, volunteering, solidarity practices, and other social projects.

Volunteer programs

The Social Commitment Unit also promotes the participation of students over 50 in solidarity activities offered to different entities and NGOs in communication, culture, disability, education, health, society, sustainability, and gender.

University Extension Classrooms

These are permanent training spaces aimed at older people who have cultural inquiries and want to have a meeting place to learn, form themselves, debate, and listen to lectures on different topics.

ETHERIA

This inter-university program of the *Xarxa Vives d' Universitats (Red Vives de Universidades)*,²⁵⁴ applies an innovative pedagogical formula that combines online learning and on-site practices. It facilitates mobility among the institutions that are part of the Vives Network by collaborating with the senior programs of the universities in the network.

More information?

<https://www.udg.edu/es/compromis-social/Arees/Formacio-50>

²⁵² Formation 50. Formation for people over 50 <https://www.udg.edu/es/compromis-social/Arees/Formacio-50>

²⁵³ Normativa. Programa Josep Torrellas. <https://www.udg.edu/es/compromis-social/arees/formacio-50/programa-josep-torrellas/normativa>

²⁵⁴ La Xarxa Vives d' Universitats (Vives Network of Universities) is a non-profit organization that represents and coordinates the joint action of 22 institutions. The purpose of the Vives Network is to strengthen relations between the universities of Catalonia, the Valencian Community, the Balearic Islands, Northern Catalonia, Andorra and Sardinia, and other territories with common geographical, historical, cultural, and linguistic ties; its purpose is to create a space to coordinate teaching, research, and cultural activities, and promote the use and standardization of one's own language <https://www.vives.org/quienes-somos/>

→ PROGRAMA UNIVERSITARIO PARA ADULTOS (UNIVERSITY PROGRAM FOR ADULTS) - UNIVERSIDAD IBEROAMERICANA PUEBLA / MEXICO

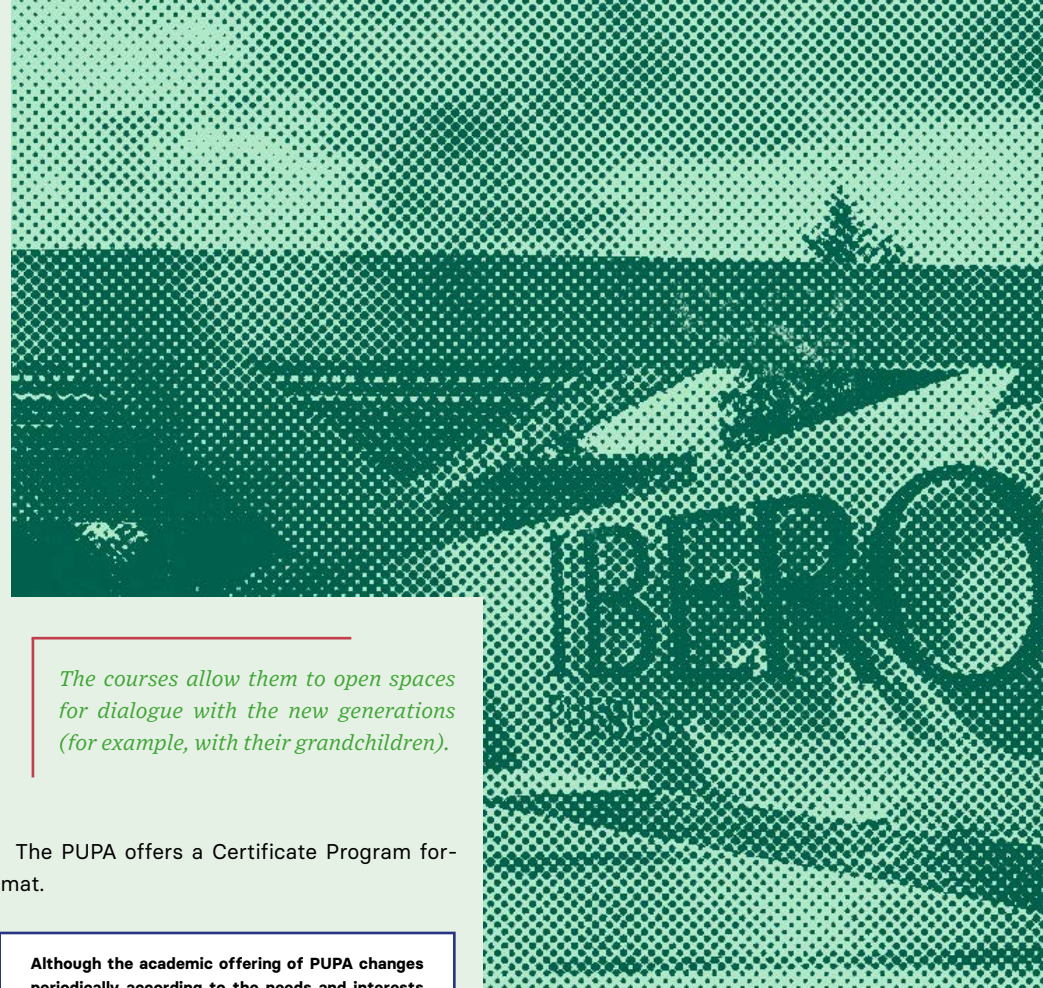
The Programa Universitario Para Adultos (University Program for Adults) (PUPA) of the Universidad Iberoamericana Puebla (IBERO Puebla) was created in 2010 at the initiative of the rector David Fernández Dávalos to extend university services to all social groups and meet the needs and interests of an emerging group, that of senior citizens.

The program is aimed at people aged 50 and over "who wish to go to university to seek their permanent intellectual, personal, emotional and social development."²⁵⁵ The only requirements to be part of this program are knowing how to read and write and being interested in continuing to learn. Admission does not require an entrance exam or accreditation of degrees or academic certificates.

Professor María del Carmen Mota González, from PUPA, points out that the average age of the students is 65, most of them retired from different disciplines; however, the program accommodates various profiles, including people who completed a technical degree and decided to return to university.

According to Mota González, the average PUPA student is not seeking to obtain a degree or certification for the working world. The professor explains that the university came to consider this last option but changed its mind when realizing that the students are not interested and only go to university to enjoy themselves. "Students are aware that to have a better quality of life as senior adults, they need to be learning permanently."²⁵⁶

Another reason people sign up for this program is to create social networks and groups of friends their age. The courses also allow them to dialogue with the new generations (for example, with their grandchildren).



The courses allow them to open spaces for dialogue with the new generations (for example, with their grandchildren).

The PUPA offers a Certificate Program format.

Although the academic offering of PUPA changes periodically according to the needs and interests of the students, it must always meet some specific objectives, namely, that participants:

- **Recognize various manifestations of art and appreciate the aesthetic dimension of artwork.**
- **Interpret and explain social, cultural, and natural processes for individual or collective decisions that favor their immediate environment.**
- **Understand, value, and give new meaning to the characteristics and potential of the human being.**
- **Recognize, respect, and appreciate the diversity of other people's abilities.**
- **Undertake and strive to achieve personal or collective projects.**
- **Learn, analyze, and appreciate the different religious and spiritual manifestations, assuming a critical perspective that enriches their spiritual experience.**

The PUPA has four axes of formation:

- 1. Dialogue, faith, and culture.**
- 2. Human development.**
- 3. Social sciences.**
- 4. Appreciation of the arts.**

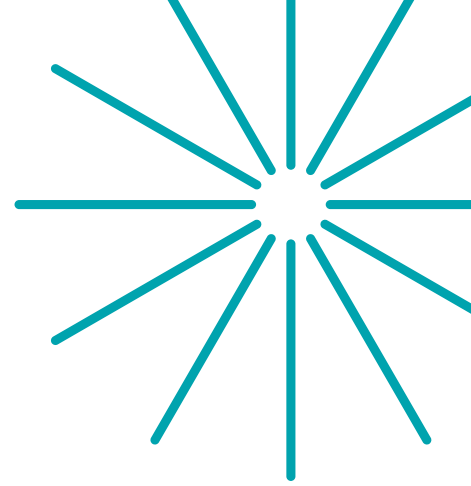
The classes offered include Creativity for Management and Release of Emotions, Women in Music, Philosophy for Wellness, Women in Music, and How and Why We Think.

More information?

<https://web.iberopuebla.mx/oferta-academica/cursos-y-diplomados/diplomados/programa-universitario-para-adultos-pupa-presencial>

²⁵⁵ Programa Universitario para Adultos (PUPA) <https://web.iberopuebla.mx/oferta-academica/cursos-y-diplomados/diplomados/programa-universitario-para-adultos-pupa-presencial>

²⁵⁶ Interview conducted with teacher María del Carmen Mota González on March 3, 2020.



A place for intellectual growth and the establishment of social connections after retirement.

→ PLATO SOCIETY OF LOS ANGELES / UNITED STATES

The PLATO Society of Los Angeles (formerly known as the UCLA PLATO Society) is a lifelong learning institute located in Westwood, just south of the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) campus. The PLATO Society (for Partners in Learning Actively Teaching Ourselves) was founded in 1980 due to the study on lifelong learning by Elizabeth Lawrence Cless, Rosemary Park, and Leonard Freedman.²⁵⁷ Lawrence Cless, a pioneer in developing continuous education for women and founder of PLATO, wanted to provide a forum for people over 50 looking for a place for intellectual growth and wanting to establish social connections after retirement. In 2013, PLATO became independent from UCLA and is now a non-profit organization with facilities.

The Society aims to “provide a diverse population of active, intellectually curious adults from various career paths with opportunities to learn in study discussion groups, colloquia, lectures, travel, cultural events, and social activities.”²⁵⁷ PLATO members have access to more than 70 Discussion and Study Groups (SDG) that they create and direct, in which they can learn under a model that is not lecture-based but peer-to-peer teaching and learning.

The range of topics suggested and chosen by them is unlimited (for example, quantum physics, history of Europe, and modern poetry).

In addition to this, members have access to conferences, social events, field trips, and other stimulating activities.

The annual membership fee of 530 US dollars²⁵⁹ provides access to these groups and events.

It is worth mentioning that during the COVID-19 pandemic, all PLATO activities occurred virtually.

More information?

<https://theplatosociety.org/>

²⁵⁷ PLATO History, 1980 to Present. <https://theplatosociety.org/history>

²⁵⁸ The PLATO Society of Los Angeles. Who We Are. <https://theplatosociety.org/who-we-are>

²⁵⁹ Information obtained from the PLATO Society page. Cost at the time of preparation of this report. <https://theplatosociety.org/apply-to-plato>



→ **UNIVERSITAT A L'ABAST OF THE UNIVERSITAT AUTÒNOMA DE BARCELONA ("UNIVERSITY WITHIN REACH" AT THE UNIVERSITAT AUTÒNOMA DE BARCELONA) / SPAIN**

In the year 2000, the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) and its Graduate School opened the doors of the institution "to the entire population, without generational, social or geographical limits,"²⁶⁰ through the Universitat a l'Abast (University Within Reach) program, a proposal for social integration and development of the senior adults. As a lifelong learning initiative, its objective is personal development through multigenerational coexistence and active aging.

The study plan of the Universitat a l'Abast (University Within Reach) has three complementary lines of action:

1. Formative Plan "Aprendiendo en el Campus" (Learning on Campus)²⁶¹

It is intended for people over 50 who wish to pursue university studies on campus. Their formation options are:

- **Degree subjects.** Those interested choose from a wide range of subjects, which they can take "à la carte" with regular UAP students. Its objective is to promote coexistence and multigenerational learning.

- **Self-activities**

-The Seminars within Reach cycles are formative spaces for dynamic participation to address current issues. It comprises eight two-hour sessions, each independent of the others.

- The Monographic Courses are open to the public and have a duration of 6 hours, divided into 3 sessions.

2. University Extension Classrooms

The Universitat a l'Abast (University Within Reach) has University Extension Classrooms for senior adults who cannot attend the UAB campus or prefer to take classes directly in their locality.

In this modality, the senior citizens create the classroom of their interests, managing themselves with the support and advice of UAB experts to design the program and choose the faculty, programs, and schedules.

Currently, 18 university extension classrooms are linked to the UAB in 14 municipalities, with more than 4,500 participants.

3. Learn in Your City

This line carries up-to-date formative activities in different towns in Catalonia.

All formative programs of the Universitat a l'Abast (University Within Reach) have three general characteristics:

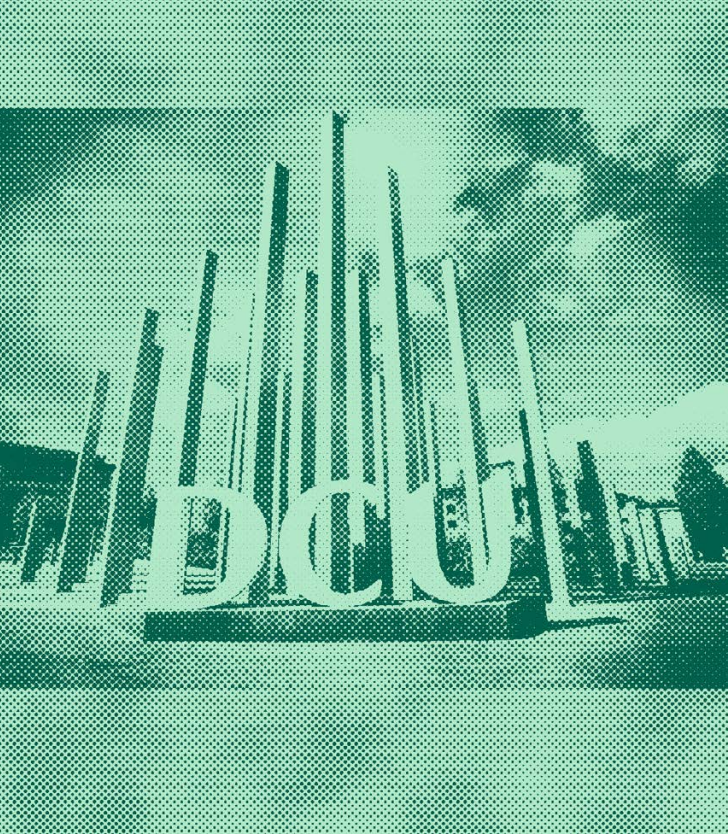
- **No entrance exams are required.**
- **The studies carried out have no academic validity, even when they are the same as those taken by "regular" students.**
- **All assessments, such as assignments and exams, are entirely voluntary. Each student sets his work pace.**

More information?

<https://www.uab.cat/web/estudiar/universitat-a-l-abast/oferta-formativa-1345830992596.html>

²⁶⁰ Programa Institucional Universitat a l'Abast (Universidad al Alcance). Presentation. <https://www.uab.cat/web/estudios/universitat-a-l-abast/presentacion-1345830992551.html>

²⁶¹ For more information about the formative offer, visit: <https://www.uab.cat/web/estudiar/universitat-a-l-abast/oferta-formativa-1345830992596.html>



→ DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY / IRELAND

Ireland is home to the founding university of the Global Network of Age-Friendly Universities, Dublin City University (DCU). Recognizing that the Irish population had been steadily aging since the 1980s, DCU set up an interdisciplinary group of people interested in investigating how to engage the growing population of older adults in the university in 2010.

The first activity of this interdisciplinary group was to develop the [ten principles](#) of the age-friendly university network mentioned above. They created a frame of reference to open a dialogue on aging. With this, DCU sought to investigate what was happening in other European countries with a higher percentage of older people; they found that very few universities were doing anything about it. Thus, two years later, in 2012, DCU created the Global Network of Age-Friendly Universities (the AFU Network).

After creating it, the university opened a [fully inclusive educational offering](#) for older adults. Instead of developing customized courses for them, it integrated older adults into existing programs. “We were not going to reinvent the wheel,” said Christine O’Kelly, coordinator of the Global Network of Age-Friendly Universities at DCU. With this approach, students (both undergraduate and graduate students as older adults) enjoy an intergenerational exchange of experiences in the classroom

At DCU, senior citizens can use the campus for sports, cultural, academic, and research activities, socialize with an intergenerational community, and even make friends.

At DCU, senior citizens can use the campus for sports, cultural, academic, and research activities.

DCU offers two types of programs for senior adults. First, people can attend the classes they want as listeners and only must pay 100 euros, which gives them access to campus facilities, the library, and a student email account. The fee does not include certificates or credits; for those who wish to take the entire course, with projects, exams, and academic credits, the cost is 500 euros.²⁶³

The second program offers exclusive and personalized classes for older adults in various subjects and areas, such as writing, digital photography, genealogy, English literature, and philosophy. The cost of these courses is 60 euros²⁶³ per subject.

At first, some older adults are apprehensive about living the whole college experience by taking classes with young college students. Consequently, in the first semester, the majority opt for the second type of program, where they can attend classes with people of their age; this allows them to gradually feel more confident not only to continue but also to try courses with students of other ages.

²⁶² Interview for the Observatory IFE, conducted in September 2019.

²⁶³ For more information on course types and costs, visit: <https://www.dcu.ie/agefriendly/news/2022/jun/taste-dcu-2022>

²⁶⁴ Costs may vary

“Welcoming senior adults to our university contributes to the social and economic capital of the university, contributes to and informs the research agenda, and empowers the wider community to take advantage of the opportunities of higher education and to support aging positively and healthily.”

Welcoming remarks from the program

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 2,000 senior adults attended the DCU campus weekly to participate in cultural, wellness, social, educational, and research activities, bringing richness to the university campus and promoting intergenerational commitment to challenge stereotypes and combat age discrimination.

... challenge stereotypes and combat age discrimination.



COVID-19 AND ITS LESSONS

When it became clear in April 2020 that the university would have to close for several months due to the pandemic, DCU began offering free classes to the public through the Zoom platform. In the first months of the contingency, the university trained more than 1,000 participants in the use of technology. Today, there is an ongoing waiting list of people interested in training to use the smartphone as a gateway to the courses.

Admittedly, the university already had the infrastructure for online teaching through its [Loop](#) system and [DCU Connected](#). However, as COVID-19 spread globally, the university looked at how it could serve a broader audience and extend its social impact. Little by little, all classes and courses occurred online through DCU Connected. The training in early 2020 paid off, and many participants migrated smoothly to the online platform. Even in undergraduate programs that traditionally offer virtual lectures, senior adults often came better prepared than students regarding connections. “We were surprised by the level of commitment the older students showed. We had thought it would be much less”,²⁶⁶

The new format had advantages and disadvantages. Firstly, the course attendance increased because geographical location was no longer limited. Secondly, technology fatigue (or Zoom Fatigue) among older adults meant changes had to be made to the Love of Lifelong Learning program (for example, the duration of classes and lectures and the number of people in each session were reduced).

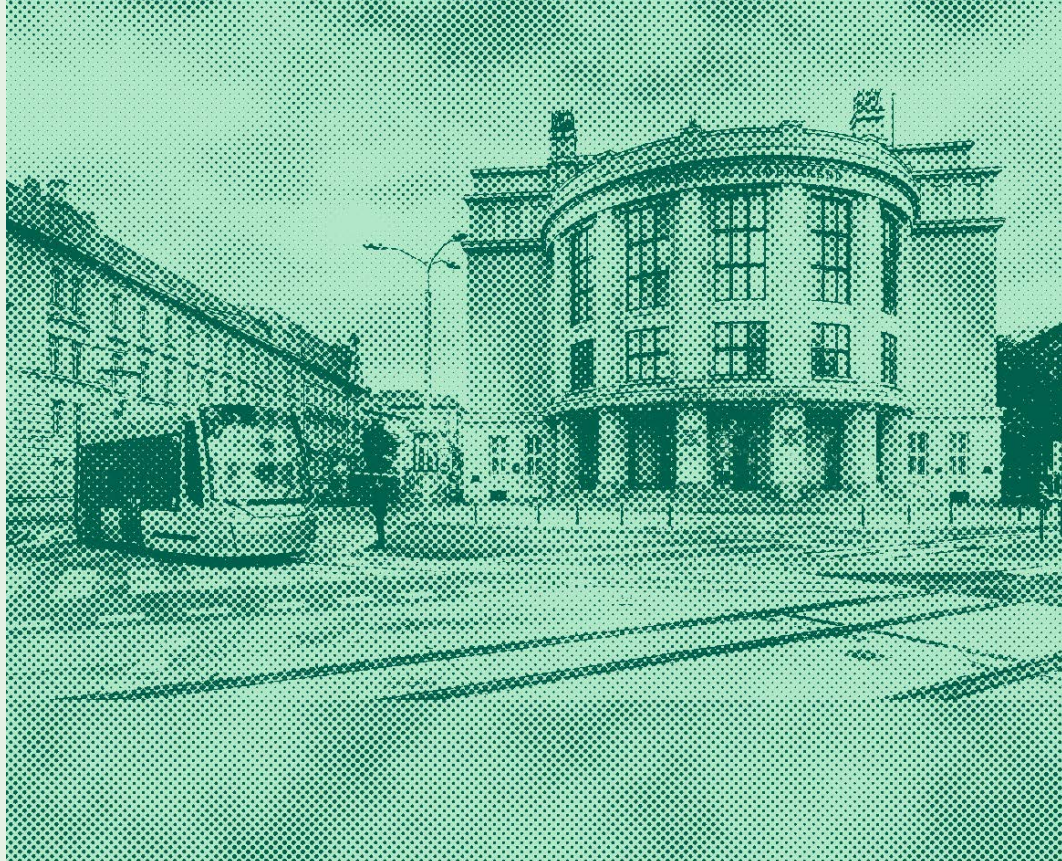
For Christine O’Kelly, the health crisis left two fundamental lessons: one was realizing that the health, educational, and social systems were unprepared for a population that is increasingly aging; the other was recognizing the importance of continuing the work of DCU and promoting more initiatives like this one.

More information?

<https://www.dcu.ie/agefriendly>

²⁶⁵ Interview for the Observatory IFE, conducted in February 2021.

²⁶⁶ Interview for the Observatory IFE, conducted in February 2021.



→ UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE - COMENIUS UNIVERSITY OF BRATISLAVA / SLOVAKIA

The University of the Third Age of the Comenius University of Bratislava began in 1990. In its first course, the institution had 235 students.²⁶⁷ At present, the number is close to 2,000 students.

The programs collaborate with the faculties of Comenius University, the University of Economics, the Faculty of Architecture of the Technical University of Slovakia in Bratislava, and the Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra..

The institution offers courses in more than 35 fields of knowledge through non-formal formation.

The faculty includes academic and scientific professionals from Comenius University, other participating universities, and guest professors from the country and abroad.

The University is aimed at people over 50 who have completed high school. There are no entrance exams; those interested only must submit their application to enter.

The objectives of the University of the Third Age of the Comenius University of Bratislava include:²⁶⁸

- **Contribute to guaranteeing the right to education for older adults.**
- **Create a new high-quality life program for older people.**
- **Help create valuable leisure activities.**
- **Expand horizons and knowledge, and help older adults have the latest information on science and society.**
- **Help older adults face the new social contexts they face after retirement.**
- **Contribute to the continuous improvement of the health of older adults and prevent psychological aging.**

The program has a duration of three years. During the first year, students attend general interest courses, and during the second and third years, they focus entirely on their chosen fields of study. At the end of the three years, graduates receive a certificate

More information?

<https://cdv.uniba.sk/en/university-of-the-third-age/about-us/>

²⁶⁷ Centre for Continuing Education. Comenius University Bratislava. About Us. <https://cdv.uniba.sk/en/university-of-the-third-age/about-us/>

²⁶⁸ Centre for Continuing Education. Comenius University Bratislava. About Us. <https://cdv.uniba.sk/en/university-of-the-third-age/about-us/>



→ **UNIVERSIDAD DE LOS MAYORES
(UNIVERSITY OF THE SENIORS) -
UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE
YUCATÁN / MEXICO**

In October 2018, the Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán (UADY) created the Universidad de los Mayores (University for the Elderly) (UM-UADY) program as part of its 2014-2022 Institutional Development Plan. This program is for people 55 or over interested in participating in educational, cultural, and recreational activities. The institution's objective is "to promote the participation of older adults in academic activities that contribute (to their) human development and quality of life by generating educational offerings ..."²⁶⁹

The offerings include face-to-face and virtual workshops in art and culture, psychological well-being, nutrition, body care, family finances, entrepreneurship, and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

The instructors who teach these workshops specialize in care for older adults.

More information?

<https://umayores.uady.mx/>

²⁶⁹ Universidad de los Mayores. Quiénes somos. <https://umayores.uady.mx/#/Quienessomosobjetivogeneral>

→ UNIVERSITÉ DU TEMPS LIBRE (FREE TIME UNIVERSITY) - UNIVERSITÉ DE AIX-MARSEILLE / FRANCE

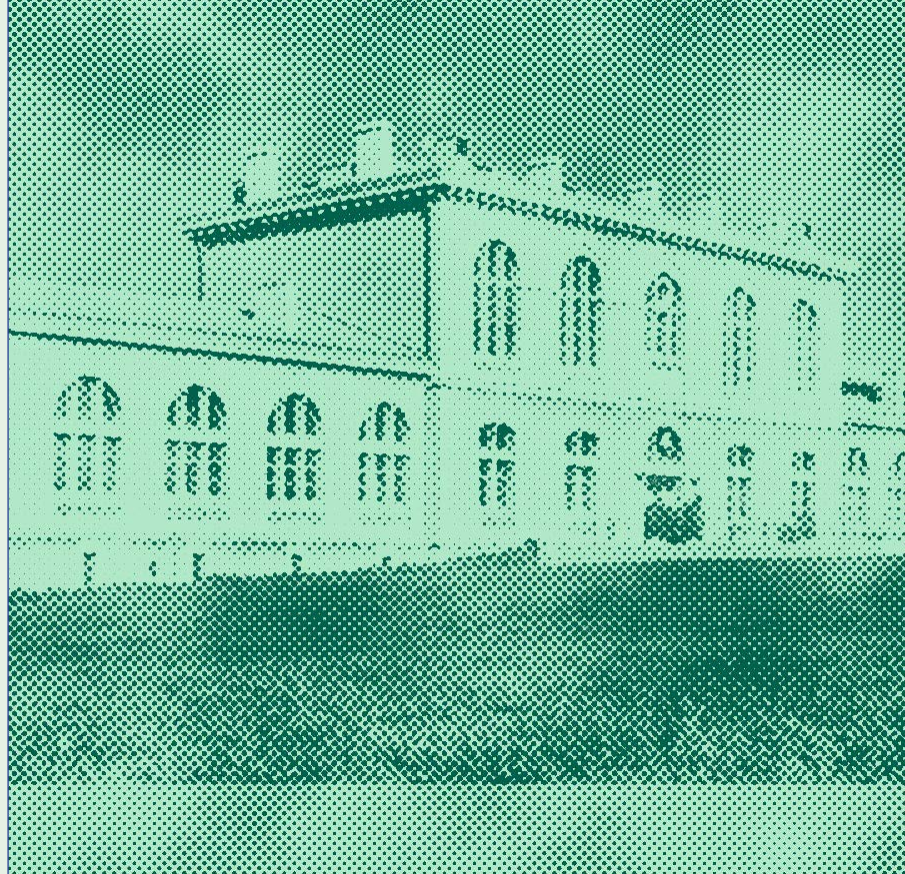
The Université du Temps Libre (UTL by its acronym in French) of the Université de Aix-Marseille is for all who want to develop knowledge and acquire skills. Since 1974, its two campuses in Aix-en-Provence and Marseille have opened doors to people of all ages and social and cultural backgrounds.

Its two campuses have opened doors to people of all ages and social and cultural backgrounds.

Solange Hernández has led the institution since September 2018. Her objective is "to allow the greatest possible number of people to access knowledge."²⁷⁰ The UTL Aix-Marseille "mobilizes the scientific community, experts from civil society and specialists in sport and culture, to offer extensive formation in the most diverse areas of knowledge and well-being."²⁷¹

People interested can enroll at any time of the year without taking exams or meeting a specific age requirement. The goal is to grow for fun.

The courses are on multiple topics, such as foreign languages, history, science, yoga, Nordic walking, swimming, painting, drawing, writing, enology, computing, music, and astronomy.



Courses and registrations are in four different formats:²⁷²

Conference.

- individual conference (paid at the entrance a few minutes before the event, each costing 6 euros).²⁷³
- Package of twelve conferences (The access card, for 65 euros, is valid indefinitely until completing the twelve conferences).
- Complete conference package (costing 130 euros).

Seminar (85 euros each).

Individual activity (140 euros).

Stage (70 euros).²⁷⁴

More information?

<https://utl.univ-amu.fr/>

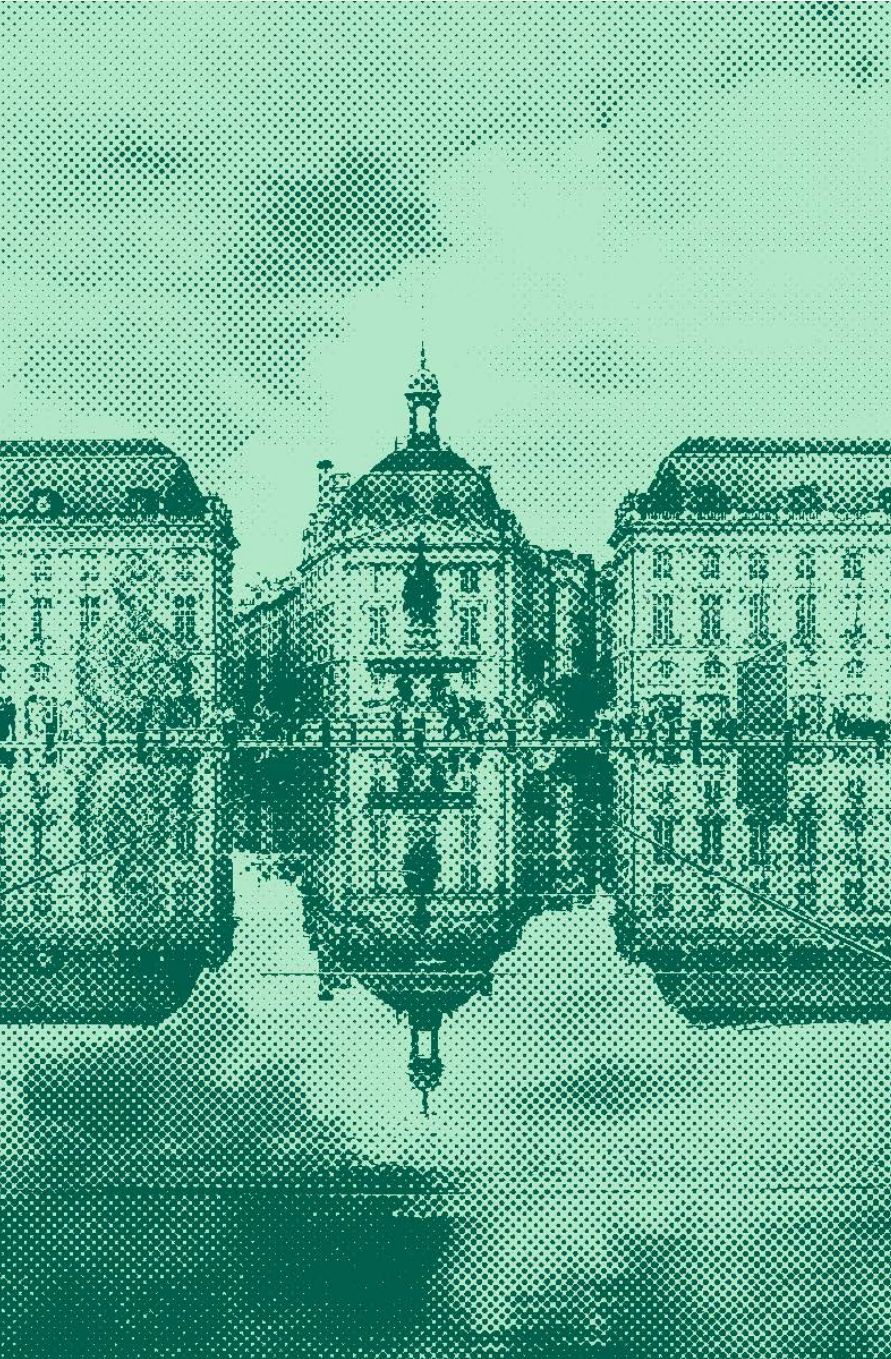
²⁷⁰ Université du Temps Libre de la Universidad de Aix-Marsella's website. <https://utl.univ-amu.fr/>

²⁷¹ Ibid

²⁷² Modalités d'inscription – Tarifs. (Tarifs for the academic cycle 2020- 2021). Université du Temps Libre de la Universidad de Aix-Marsella. <https://utl.univ-amu.fr/modalites-dinscription-tarifs>

²⁷³ Cost at the time of preparation of this report

²⁷⁴ Cost at the time of preparation of this report



→ UNIVERSITÉ DU TEMPS LIBRE (FREE TIME UNIVERSITY) - UNIVERSITÉ DE BORDEAUX / FRANCE

The Université du Temps Libre (Free Time University) (UTL) of the Université of Bordeaux, created in 1976 as part of the Aquitaine Office for Research, Studies, Information, and Liaison on the Issues of the Elderly (OAREIL, for its acronym in French), has about 5,000 participants²⁷⁵ to whom it offers 110 workshops and activities, as well as practices, talks, debates, trips, and opportunities for continuing formation.

... workshops, practices, talks, debates, trips, and opportunities for continuing formation.

This program does not require an admission test or a minimum age. The workshops comprise small groups based on the level of the participants. The themes of the workshops, conferences, and activities vary and include modern and ancient languages, economics, law, philosophy, history, art, religion, new technologies, [distance learning \(through tutorials\)](#), cyclotourism, mediation, and first aid.

Although face-to-face activities had to be postponed during the COVID-19 pandemic, the UTL continued its work virtually and remotely, like most universities and programs for older adults.

More information?

<https://www.oareil.org/presentation-de-l-universite-du-temps-libre.html>

²⁷⁵ Présentation de l'Université du temps libre. <https://www.oareil.org/presentation-de-l-universite-du-temps-libre.html>



→ **SINGAPORE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND DESIGN / SINGAPORE**

The Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD) is a public institution founded in 2009 to promote knowledge and forge innovative leaders and citizens who meet the needs of society.²⁷⁶

The SUTD Academy argues that lifelong learning goes beyond formal education.²⁷⁷ Thus, its short courses and modular courses to obtain a master's degree have the flexibility to adapt to self-directed and self-planned education.

SUTD Academy was established to allow industry professionals to update, reinforce, and expand their knowledge and skills. Students can develop skills to excel in the workplace and overcome challenges through their courses.²⁷⁸ SUTD President Chow Tow Chong says, "The concept of Institutes of Higher Education must transform to provide lifelong learning pathways, from pre-employment to continuing education and formation. This will help students stay agile and resilient, as these skills will ensure they remain relevant in rapidly changing workplaces. All this supports a solid economy for the future."²⁷⁹

Its short courses have the flexibility to adapt to self-directed and self-planned education.

That people can remain relevant in rapidly changing workplaces.

The SUTD and Tecnológico de Monterrey

In August 2022, the Singapore University of Technology and Design signed a collaboration agreement with Tecnológico de Monterrey to jointly explore a new digital platform to innovate cyber-physical learning for higher education and lifelong learning, present and future.

The agreement includes the following activities:

Promote the exchange of practices and experiences in:

- Assembly and use of infrastructure.
- Evaluation of educational programs.
- Delivery models.

Conduct joint experiments and research on cyber-physical learning in technology-enabled learning, cognitive neuroscience, pedagogical innovations, learning analytics, personalized learning, and others.

Explore the feasibility of exchanging data and conducting cross-cultural/comparative evaluative studies.

Carry out joint experiments to test innovative cross-border educational models.

More information?

<https://www.sutd.edu.sg/Admissions/Academy>

²⁷⁶ Singapore University of Technology and Design. About. <https://www.sutd.edu.sg/About>
²⁷⁷ Singapore University of Technology and Design. <https://www.sutd.edu.sg/>
²⁷⁸ SUTD Academy (CET). <https://www.sutd.edu.sg/Admissions/Academy>
²⁷⁹ SUTD. (2022, julio). SUTD hosted SkillsFuture Festival@SUTD – Equipping Singapore's workforce for the future economy. <https://www.sutd.edu.sg/About/happenings/Press-Releases/2022/7/SkillsFuture-Festival-SUTD-design-future-economy>

→ UNIVERSITÉ TOUS ÂGES (UNIVERSITY ALL AGES) – UNIVERSITÉ LUMIÈRE LYON 2 / FRANCE

The Université Tous Âges (University All Ages) (UTA) of the Université Lumière Lyon 2 was founded more than 40 years ago with the mission of spreading knowledge among adults, whatever their level of education, and opening the university to the community. Today, the UTA operates within the University and in different regions of Lyon and its municipalities: Ain, Isère, and Rhône.

The Université Lyon II, through the UTA, offers the general public a formative program whose aim is to awaken curiosity, exercise reflection, and critical thinking, and share the knowledge produced at the University.²⁸⁰ The program is open to all seniors with no admission requirements or exams; participants come for the pleasure of learning and have access to the courses and knowledge in science and culture generated at the University and in its research laboratories.

Participants have access to the courses and knowledge in science and culture generated at the University and in its research laboratories.

The faculty at UTA are professors and researchers from the Université Lyon II, specialists in a wide variety of disciplines, which they share with students interested in archaeology, art, cinema, law, economics, literature, psychology, educational sciences, and political science, among others.

The program comprises three modalities:²⁸¹

Conference cycles. Eight two-hour conferences end with a space for questions, exchange of ideas, and debate. They occur in different venues, with quotas between 80 and 500 attendees (the average in the 2019-2020 academic year was 98 people).

Courses. The courses comprise small groups (the average was 22 people in 2019-2020). They have variable duration, depending on the subject, and by their nature, allow a closer interaction between the teacher and the participants.

Virtual courses and conferences. As of January 2021, face-to-face activities were canceled due to restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic; part of the UTA program was offered on virtual platforms. This modality still operates today, and some courses are only accessible online. Lectures are limited to audiences of 50 to 150 people, and courses to 15 and 35. (The number of participants depends on the professor's choice).

UTA students have auditing status and do not enjoy the full benefits of undergraduate or postgraduate students of the Université Lyon II.

The annual registration is 20 euros, to which is added the separate cost for each course or conference cycle (40 euros for the first cycle of conferences, 30 for the second, and 20 for subsequent ones, and 7.5 euros per credit hour,²⁸² in the case of courses).²⁸³

In the 2019-2020 academic cycle,²⁸⁴ 60 UTA professors and researchers provided 677 hours of courses and conferences to more than 2,000 attendees. (During the 2021-2022 cycle, face-to-face activities did not occur due to the pandemic, and there is no data on the number of people who registered for online activities.)

More information?

<https://uta.univ-lyon2.fr/>

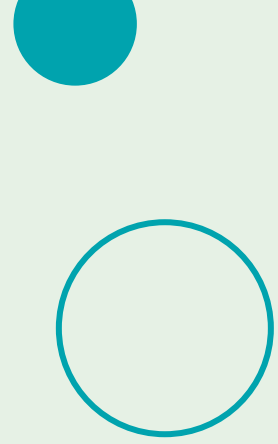
²⁸⁰ Qu'est-ce que l'UTA? <https://uta.univ-lyon2.fr/universite-tous-ages/>

²⁸¹ Qu'est-ce que l'UTA? <https://uta.univ-lyon2.fr/universite-tous-ages/>

²⁸² Cost at the time of preparation of this report

²⁸³ Qu'est-ce que l'UTA? <https://uta.univ-lyon2.fr/universite-tous-ages/>

²⁸⁴ Ibid



→ ONE DAY UNIVERSITY

One Day University was founded in 2006 by Steven Schragis and John Galvin, thinking of those who wanted to “go back to university, but only for one day” (hence its name).²⁸⁵ It started in New York City but quickly spread throughout the United States due to the growing success of its lectures. Since 2022, the program has been in more than 61 cities in the United States.

What is behind this success? One Day University members enjoy professors from leading universities presenting them with unique versions of their best lectures on various topics. The experience is like “a fun day at university with your favorite professor but without the homework and tests.”²⁸⁶

“a fun day at university with your favorite professor, but without the homework and tests.”

Before the pandemic, activities were in person, but the health crisis forced the management team to move to a virtual environment. This format proved highly successful and has given seniors new flexibility. “Now they learn what they want, when they want, at their own pace. If they want to watch a conference and break for dinner and come back, they can”, says Steven Schragis.²⁸⁷

Moreover, virtuality has considerably lowered the cost of classes — tickets for an in-person event used to cost upwards of 100 US dollars per person. Now, following the model of Netflix or Spotify, they can pay a subscription of \$8.95 a month, \$89 a year, or \$139 for two years,²⁸⁸ and have access to the talks that broadcast live five days a week, as well as a video library with more than 400 lectures.

More information?

<https://www.onedayu.com/>

- 285 Schragis , S. (2021, March 23). How This Adult-Education Entrepreneur Did a 180 in the Pandemic. Retrieved from Next Avenue: <https://www.nextavenue.org/adult-education-entrepreneur-pandemic/>
- 286 One Day University's Pandemic Pivot Is A Stay At Home Winner. <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/one-day-universitys-pandemic-pivot-is-a-stay-at-home-winner-301188104.html>
- 287 Schragis , S. (2021, March 23). How This Adult-Education Entrepreneur Did a 180 in the Pandemic. Retrieved from Next Avenue: <https://www.nextavenue.org/adult-education-entrepreneur-pandemic/>
- 288 Information Retrieved from the official site of One Day University. Cost at the time of preparation of this report. <https://www.onedayu.com/membership-options>

→ UNIVERSIDAD PARA ADULTOS (UNIVERSITY FOR ADULTS) - BENEMÉRITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE PUEBLA / MEXICO

In August 2016, the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP) began the Programa Universitario para Adultos 50 y Más (University Program for Adults 50 and Over) (PUA) to provide spaces that allow people over 50 years of age to achieve professional, academic, and work development goals, in a flexible learning environment that promotes creativity. In the autumn of 2016, the first courses and certificate programs opened, and in 2018, the first generation of three from the latter graduated.²⁸⁹ Education for older adults calls for educational models and didactic proposals to reduce inherited insufficiencies at fundamental levels. In this sense, universities have a crucial role in building a system for forming and requalifying the working population and an integrated system that supports lifelong education with new models and diverse, inclusive, and flexible didactic proposals. Based on this experience and recognizing that the environment requires preparing and developing capacities for adults in the workplace, on January 9, 2020, the Universidad para Adultos (University for Adults) (UpA) was created by agreement of the H. Consejo Universitario (H. University Council), aimed at expanding formation opportunities.

An integrated system that supports lifelong education with new models and diverse, inclusive, and flexible didactic proposals.

The UpA is an institutional system oriented to the attention of the population over 25 years of age to offer professionalization and integral, permanent, affordable, and relevant formation to positively impact the social, economic, and environmentally sustainable dimensions.

UpA MAIN POPULATION SERVED

Young adults

Identified needs:

- Professional title
- Certification of labor competencies
- Courses that conclude with a certification
- Flexible schedules

Mature adults

Identified needs:

- Professional title
- Completion of a truncated career
- Learning to use ICTs
- Certification of labor competencies
- Courses that conclude with a certification
- Updating through certificates or courses
- Practical courses for mastering a competency
- Flexible schedules

Full-grown adults

Identified needs:

- Learn to use ICTs
- Professional formation in areas different from theirs
- Courses without evaluation and weekly frequency
- Flexible schedules

The mission of the Universidad para Adultos (University for Adults) is to be a "space to professionalize and develop lifelong and innovative learning for adults over 25 years of age, which enhance their abilities and foster a healthy, full and transcendent life, to favor their continuous and active contribution to society".²⁹⁰

1. Lifelong learning/development
2. Professionalization for the formalization of occupational skills
3. Inclusion
4. Equal opportunities
5. Human development and personal fulfillment
6. Social mobility
7. Active aging culture
8. Citizenship formation
9. Integral development
10. Linkage and intergenerational dialogue

Currently, the UpA has a [wide range of courses and workshops](#) offered in hybrid, online, and in-person modalities. The topics of the courses range from art therapy, healthy cooking, herbal medicine, and yoga to basic computing, preventive dentistry, and artistic avant-garde.

More information?
<https://upa.buap.mx/>

²⁸⁹ Vázquez López, J. "Inicia una historia: Programa Universitario para Adultos 50 y Más (PUA)".

²⁹⁰ Ibíd

→ UNIVERSITAT PER A MAJORS (SENIOR CITIZENS' UNIVERSITY) - UNIVERSITAT JAUME I / SPAIN

In 1998, the Universitat Jaume I (UJI) launched the academic program Universitat per a Majors (Senior Citizen's University). It is for people over 55 who wish to continue their studies and broaden their general knowledge.

Through this program, Universitat Jaume I seeks to "contribute to the formation, integration, and social development of the elderly."²⁹¹ Its idea is not to form students for the professional or work environment but to promote human development and contribute to the cultural advancement of society. The Universitat per a Majors (Senior Citizen's University) provides "spaces for reflection and freedom that enable the exchange of knowledge and experiences."²⁹²

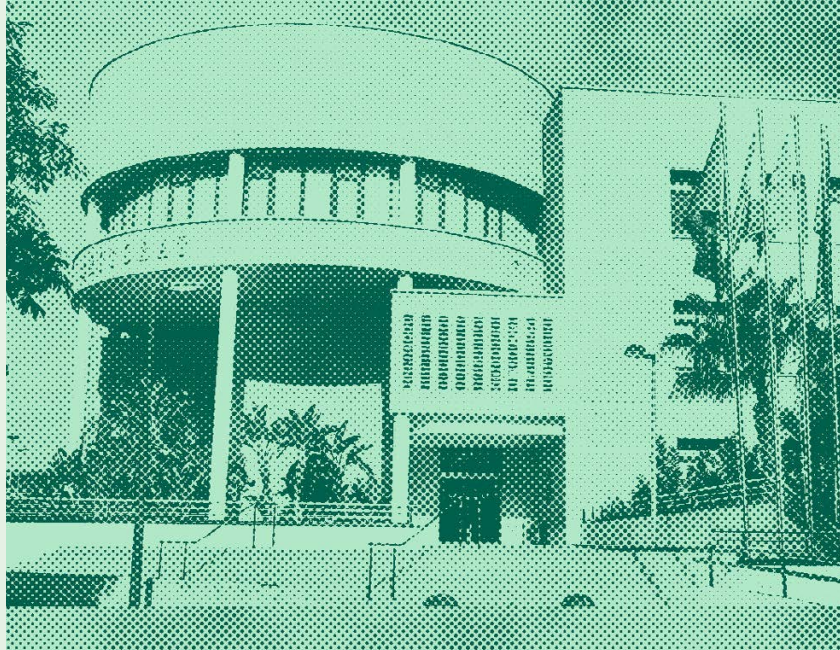
In the current global context, in which access to higher education and university life is restricted to very few people and, generally, to a specific demographic group, Universitat Jaume I wants to promote all citizens' access to universities and their courses.

... that all citizens have access to universities and their courses.

The Universitat per a Majors (Senior Citizen's University) seeks to contribute to active aging, social inclusion, and the participation of older adults in their environments.

The Universitat per a Majors (Senior Citizen's University) has the following objectives:²⁹³

- Provide an adequate space for scientific and cultural debate.
- Facilitate skills development in older students who wish to broaden their knowledge.
- Facilitate access to scientific knowledge to foster creativity and social and cultural participation.
- Facilitate access to and use of new information and communication technologies so students can make the most of current scientific and technological advances.
- Foster intergenerational relations and cultural exchange.
- Develop a basic set of skills helpful in learning to know, learning to do, and learning to live together.



The educational offering of the Universitat per a Majors (Senior Citizen's University) comprises three main areas:²⁹⁴

1. Senior university degree

- in Human and Social Sciences

2. Senior postgraduate degree

- in Expressions and images of power
- in Humor and entertainment in society
- in A Humanistic vision
- in various monographic courses

3. Classrooms for senior adults at the four campuses of the Universitat Jaume I (UJI)

Likewise, courses are transversal to develop technological and linguistic skills that complement the integral formation of students.

Along with teaching, the Universitat per a Majors (Senior Citizen's University) actively participates in research, which is promoted and developed through projects, publications, conferences, and university exchanges.

²⁹¹Universitat per a Majors. About page. <http://mayores.uji.es/about/>

²⁹² Ibíd

²⁹³ Universitat per a Majors. About page. <http://mayores.uji.es/about/>

²⁹⁴ Universitat per a Majors. Docencia. <http://mayores.uji.es/docencia/>



One of the research initiatives led by the UJI is the [Proyecto Erasmus+ Live eLearn](#), *Online experiential education for adults*. This project, coordinated by the UJI in collaboration with partners from Italy, the Czech Republic, and Finland, began in November 2019 and ended in February 2022.

The European project Live eLearn had the following results:²⁹⁵

- Developing an online Assessment tool to assess ICT competency (Information and Communication Technologies) and provide suggestions on course content and its tools and methods.
- Developing a Catalog of experiential educational methods and a series of case studies to integrate ICTs into the different courses.

The Universitat per a Majors (Senior Citizen's University) began in 1998 on the Campus de Castellón de la Plana (Campus of Castellón de la Plana) (Valencian Community) with only 38 students. Ten years later, it had 752 students, which grew until 2019, the year of highest participation, with 1,089 students.²⁹⁶ Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020-2021, participation declined to 483 students in the first quarter and 327 students in the second. However, in 2022, 946 students were registered.²⁹⁷

The UJI reiterates its commitment to lifelong learning through the offerings of formative programs for older adults and research initiatives in active aging, pedagogies applied to adults, and the use of ICTs for older people, as well as the creation of knowledge networks ([Wikisènior](#), radio program [Vox Sènior](#), [Revista Renaixement](#) and [Biblioteca Virtual Sènior](#)).

More information?

<http://mayores.uji.es/>

²⁹⁵ Proyecto Erasmus+ LiveeLearn. <http://mayores.uji.es/7752-2/>

²⁹⁶ Anàlisi del perfil de l'alumnat. Curs 2019-2020. <http://mayores.uji.es/memorias-e-informes/>

²⁹⁷ Anàlisi del perfil de l'alumnat. Curs 2019-2020. <http://mayores.uji.es/memorias-e-informes/>



In the spring semester of 2018, the League had 1,161 courses and over 61,000 students,³⁰⁰ according to figures provided by Xiong Fangjie, executive vice president of the University.

Investigation

The Shanghai University for the Elderly has an extensive research program on the theory of education of older adults. In the same physical space, the institution concentrates on four research facilities, thus favoring interdisciplinary collaboration and the possibility of sharing resources. These institutions are:

- Shanghai Research Center for the Theory of Education of the Elderly
- Shanghai Academy of Education for the Elderly
- International Research Center for the Education of the Elderly
- Chinese Association of Universities for the Aged

→ SHANGHAI UNIVERSITY FOR THE ELDERLY / CHINA

Among the first universities for older adults to open in China was the Shanghai University for the Elderly. Founded in 1985, it started with just two classes and 58 students,²⁹⁸ and by 2018, it had ten departments and 179 courses on topics such as calligraphy and painting, foreign languages, piano, literature, art, history, and computer use, among others.

Today, the requirement to enroll in this university is to be over 50 years old in the case of women and over 60 in the case of men. Those over 80 can enroll if their relatives sign a consent letter.

To expand the educational offering, the University has 21 branch schools in the city, including five at the district level, nine universities, and seven enterprises and institutions, which comprise the Shanghai University for The Elderly Education League. Its goal is “promoting balanced development in elderly education throughout the city.”²⁹⁹

Following the evaluation standard and criteria set by the China Association of Universities for the Aged (CAUA), the Shanghai University for the Elderly has developed seven educational standards for its courses:³⁰¹

1. Combination of knowledge and entertainment
2. Learning traditional and modern cultures
3. Appreciation of Chinese and Western cultures
4. Offering of long and short courses
5. Mutual improvement in teaching and learning
6. Adoption of *online* learning
7. Stratified schooling (i.e., teaching students according to their aptitude)

²⁹⁸ Xiong, F. (2018). Educational Standards of the University for The Elderly. Standards of Education among U3as and the Intergenerational Formation. https://selid.efos-europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Using_Technology_to_Motivate_Senior_Stud-2.pdf

²⁹⁹ Xiong, F. (2018). Educational Standards of the University for The Elderly. Standards of Education among U3as and the Intergenerational Formation. https://selid.efos-europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Using_Technology_to_Motivate_Senior_Stud-2.pdf

³⁰⁰ *Ibíd*

³⁰¹ Xiong, F. (2018). Educational Standards of the University for The Elderly. Standards of Education among U3as and the Intergenerational Formation. https://selid.efos-europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Using_Technology_to_Motivate_Senior_Stud-2.pdf



→ TIANJIN UNIVERSITY FOR THE ELDERLY / CHINA

Founded in 1985 and named the country's "Most Advanced University for the Elderly"³⁰² in 2011, this University has nine colleges that teach foreign languages, calligraphy, painting, life skills, health and fitness, medicine and health care, dance and theater, music, and information technology. The courses are organized into basic, intermediate, advanced, and professional levels, lasting up to two years each.

In 2017, the University had an enrollment of nearly 26,000 students.

Courses are so sought after that enrolment queues often begin a day before registration.

*Tan Guan Hong
in [Urban Solutions](#).*

This University is said to be "for seniors, by seniors"³⁰³ since a large part of its 358-employee staff comprises older people, of whom around 70% are teaching staff.

Students in their last year and graduates often form clubs to teach other senior citizens and offer free community classes.

In general, the university fulfills the social function of intergenerational integration.

³⁰² Guan Hong, T. (2017, January). Lifelong Learning for Seniors, by Seniors. *Urban Solutions* (10), pp. 68-73. <https://www.clc.gov.sg/research-publications/publications/urban-solutions/view/issue-10>

³⁰³ Guan Hong, T. (2017, January). Lifelong Learning for Seniors, by Seniors. *Urban Solutions* (10), pp. 68-73. <https://www.clc.gov.sg/research-publications/publications/urban-solutions/view/issue-10>



→ UNIVERSIDAD PERMANENTE DE LA UNIVERSIDAD DE ALICANTE (PERMANENT UNIVERSITY OF THE UNIVERSIDAD DE ALICANTE) / SPAIN

The Universidad Permanente (Permanent University) of the Universidad de Alicante was founded in 1999, following the philosophy that universities “should not only be seen as a place of professional preparation but also as a school for life.”³⁰³

Universities “should be seen as a place of professional preparation and a school for life.”

The Universidad de Alicante, a pioneer in studies of gerontology and active aging with the idea that all people should continue learning throughout their lives, created the Universidad Permanente (Permanent University) more than 20 years ago with the aim of “facilitating adults’ personal and social development through a program aimed at Science and Culture for intergenerational relations, to (thus) improve (their) quality of life and encourage (their) participation as social facilitators.”³⁰⁵

The Universidad Permanente (Permanent University) is aimed at people over 50 residing in the Valencian community with aspirations for sociocultural improvement without needing a prior degree.

The program pursues the following objectives:³⁰⁸

- Contribute to the continuous adaptation of older adults to accelerating environmental changes.
- Offer an opportunity to pursue higher education to adult people without the opportunity for training.
- Offer educational alternatives to those professionals who wish to broaden their knowledge or venture into another field of knowledge.
- Promote, recognize, and enrich the experiences acquired by older people in their working and professional lives.
- Stimulate older people to have greater social participation in their family, community, and national environment.
- Strengthen collective participation and social solidarity through intergenerational relations.
- Facilitate the opportunity to share knowledge and experiences through different intergenerational working groups.
- Establish unique lines for women in collaboration with the University Research Institute for Gender Studies.

- Promote knowledge of Spanish, culture, and history of Spain among other nationalities residing in the Alicante province.

The Universidad Permanente (Permanent University) program has three pillars:

1. **Teaching** through courses designed for older adults’ ad hoc needs and concerns, using an active methodology based on dialogue and exchange.
2. **Research** through active participation in various research groups and projects at national and international levels on various topics related to active aging and the socio-cultural immersion of older people.
3. **The Values Incubator**, a cluster of ideas and initiatives from the students of the Universidad Permanente (Permanent University), is designed to support and promote the social leadership of older adults as a driver of change.

³⁰⁴ Universidad Permanente. Introducción. <https://web.ua.es/es/upua/informacion/introduccion.html>

³⁰⁵ Universidad Permanente. Introducción. <https://web.ua.es/es/upua/informacion/introduccion.html>

³⁰⁶ ¿Qué es la Universidad Permanente? <https://web.ua.es/es/upua/informacion/presentacion.html#objetivos>

Marian Aleson Carbonell, director of the Universidad Permanente (Permanent University), comments that one of the biggest challenges facing the institution is to convince itself and society that it is crucial to cover the existing gap in the care and formation of the elderly population, who are eager to continue learning and actively participate in their communities.³⁰⁷ Considering this patent need, the Universidad Permanente (Permanent University) implemented intergenerational projects encouraging the exchange and discussion of ideas, experiences, and values between students of different ages. One of its star projects, says Carbonell, is the mentoring program, in which older adults with professional experience advise the students of the Universidad de Alicante on business challenges in strategy, finance, product, marketing, and financing. These initiatives create intergenerational synergies with a direct impact on society.

In the mentoring program, older adults with professional experience advise the students of the Universidad de Alicante on some business challenges.

According to data from 2021-2022³⁰⁸ of the Universidad Permanente (Permanent University), 936 students registered in this course, of whom the majority were women (64.96 %); on the other hand, the predominant age group was 61 to 70 years. In the 2017-2018 cycle, the Permanent University registered its highest enrollment, 1,459 students (versus 249 students in 1999),³⁰⁹ which is likely to increase.

The academic offering of the Universidad Permanente (Permanent University) includes the teaching staff of the Universidad de Alicante, and many classes were carried out in the host campus of the latter, which favors intergenerational interaction and coexistence.

Students at the Universidad Permanente (Permanent University) have the same rights as any other university student (they have a university card and access to the facilities, for example). The idea is that no matter the stage of their life, they have access to the college experience.

Although the students do not receive a professional degree at the end of their studies, they receive a senior diploma that accredits them for completing the program. They can also opt for an intergraduate program that allows them to enroll in courses offered by the university.

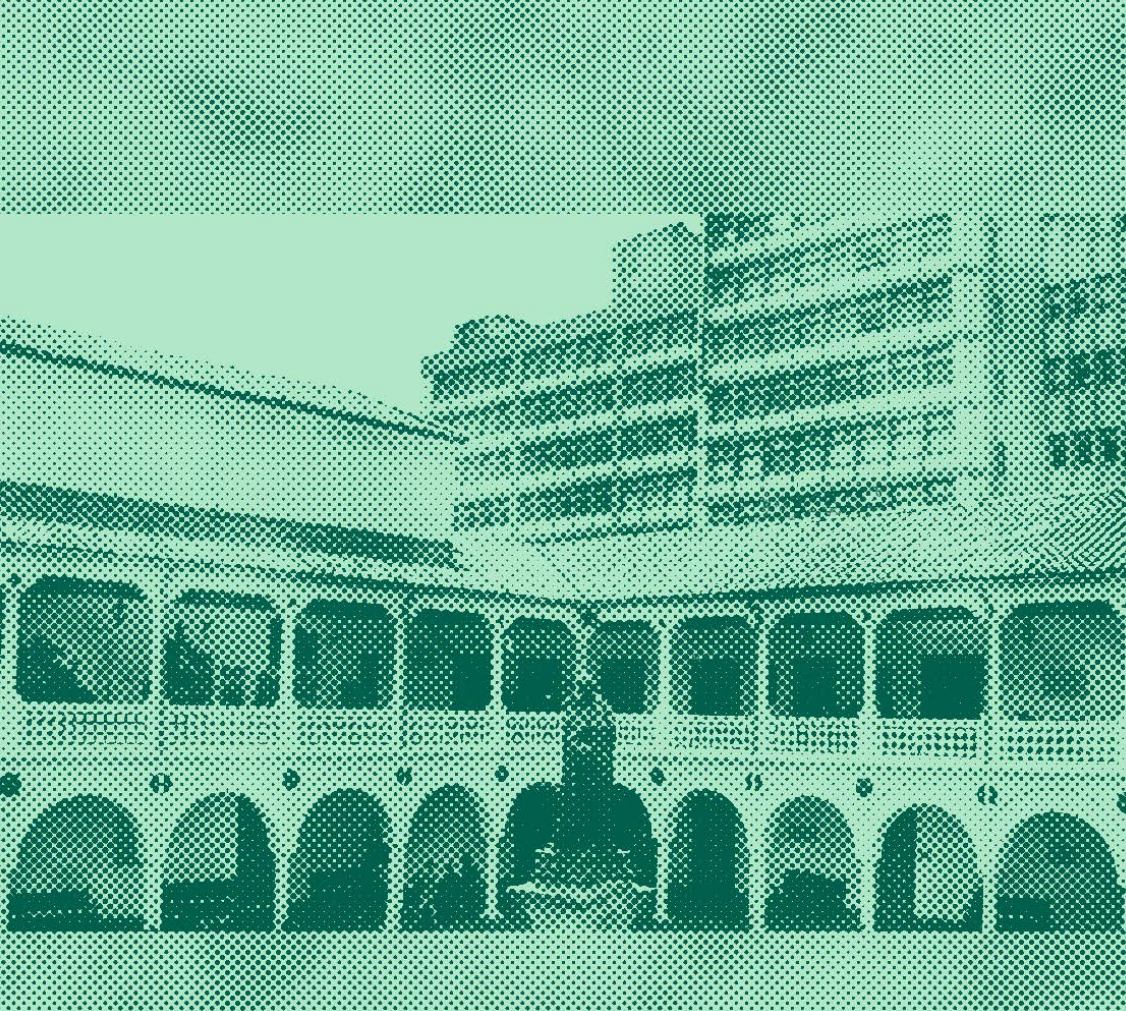
More information?

<https://web.ua.es/es/upua/>

³⁰⁷ Interview for the Observatory IFE, conducted in September 2019

³⁰⁸ Statistics for the 2021-2022 academic year. Universidad Permanente. https://www.universidadpermanente.com/main.php?g2_itemId=54421

³⁰⁹ Ibid



→ UNIVERSIDAD SENIOR (SENIOR UNIVERSITY) - UNIVERSIDAD DEL ROSARIO / COLOMBIA

The Universidad Senior (Senior University) (UR Senior) is a part of the Universidad del Rosario, Colombia, on lifelong education and the integration of seniors in the university environment. With the motto “More to tell, more to live,” the UR Senior seeks to “promote formation spaces with social commitment, effecting equal opportunities to develop cultural and vocational values among the elderly within the framework of a lifelong education process.”³¹⁰

Two objectives of the UR Senior are:

- Promote in older adults (current and future generations) capacities that allow them to improve their quality of life by creating spaces to learn, raise awareness, and develop skills and attitudes for an active and productive life.
- Contribute to reducing the digital divide with courses and workshops on actively using new technologies.

Contribute to reducing the digital divide with courses and workshops on actively using new technologies.

Currently, the UR Senior has a wide range of courses in face-to-face and virtual modalities on topics such as architecture, nutrition, choir, medicinal plants, embroidery and knitting, use of digital devices, mindfulness, active aging, gardening, financial self-management, integral health through theater, and preparation for retirement.

More information?

<https://educacioncontinua.urosario.edu.co/ur-senior>

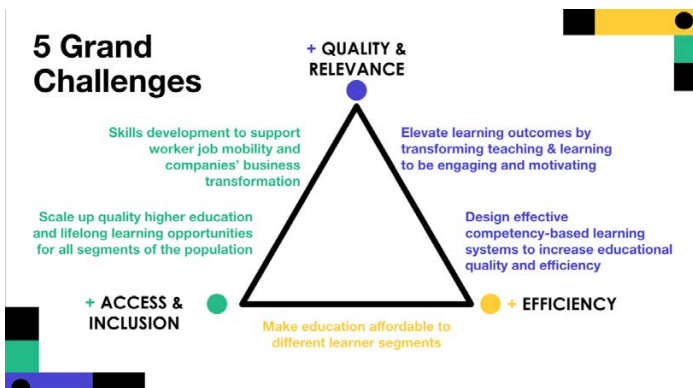
³¹⁰ UR Senior. Universidad del Rosario. <https://educacioncontinua.urosario.edu.co/ur-senior>

03 TECNOLÓGICO DE MONTERREY LIFELONG LEARNING INITIATIVES

→ INSTITUTE FOR THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION

Tecnológico de Monterrey launched the *Institute for the Future of Education (IFE)*, in December 2020, dedicated to promoting educational innovation and generating research and entrepreneurship to improve the quality of higher education and lifelong learning.

... research and entrepreneurship to improve the quality of higher education and lifelong learning.



The main objective of the IFE is to find solutions to challenges in higher education and lifelong learning, such as:

- Encouraging the development of skills to support the labor mobility of workers and the transformation of companies.
- Designing effective competency-based education and lifelong learning systems.
- Expanding access to quality higher education and lifelong learning opportunities to all population segments.
- Making education affordable and relevant to different student segments.

Key Themes for the Future of Education



The **IFE** has initiatives for research, dissemination, entrepreneurship, alternative credentials, impact measurement, and promotion of educational innovation. One of the **IFE** initiatives focused on lifelong learning is the recently created IFE Europe, a joint initiative between Tecnológico de Monterrey, the Government of Cantabria, and the Universidad de Cantabria.

IFE Europe began operations during the first quarter of 2022, seeking to foster collaboration between professors from Tecnológico de Monterrey and the Universidad de Cantabria to co-create the future of education and lifelong learning.

IFE Europe has three main areas of development:

- Artificial intelligence and data science in education.
- Neuroeducation, applying all the learning in cognitive neurosciences to the understanding of how people learn.
- Lifelong learning so that universities change to become formative partners for their students throughout their lives.

More information about the Institute for the Future of Education?

<https://tec.mx/en/ife>

→ PLATAFORMAS (PLATFORMS): CONNECTION - LEARNING - CREATION

The **Plataformas (Platforms)** initiative is a startup that builds value through agile habilitations; it intends to “create an ecosystem of platforms that facilitate a lifelong learning journey for leaders and learners.” Beneficiaries will connect, access, and participate in various personalized learning experiences that allow them to apply what they have learned and make an impact.

As a strategic project of Tecnológico de Monterrey’s 2025 plan, it seeks to connect with new audiences outside the institution through alliances with other companies and universities.

As the following diagram shows, to visualize new models of value creation on platforms, one must start with a *data central* that functions as a receiver of information, a sort of *connectome* that generates a map of connections.

This map contains two ecosystems, one for learning and the other for creation.

The learning ecosystem focuses on hyper-personalized lifelong learning, where platforms accompany learners of any age on their learning journey through quality experiences tailored to them. In this ecosystem, it is essential to consider that the world chan-

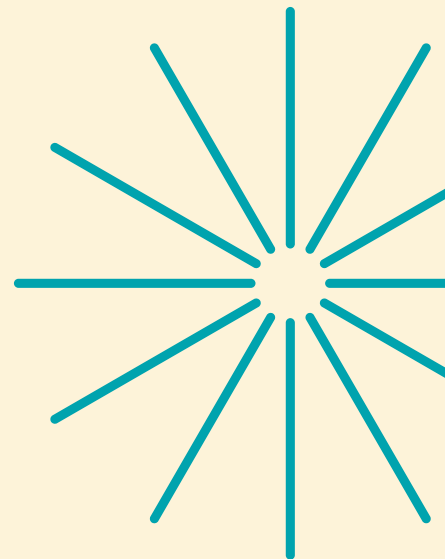
ges, and people can impact it. Therefore, some different tools and resources have been developed as prototypes to guide the learning path of people at different stages of life, from high school to professional life, and transitions in between.

Within the learning ecosystem, **Soy Tutor (I am a Tutor)** was created, a tutoring platform for high school students to reduce the knowledge gaps generated by the pandemic. The initiative works through an automated match of students, tutors, and subjects with a peer network modality.

In the initial phase, Tecnológico de Monterrey students validate scholarship service hours as tutors for high school students in mathematics, physics, and chemistry, the subjects most affected by the pandemic.

In the future, the platform intends to be open for students of the institution and any tutor under a quality validation model and for data use.

Plataformas (Platforms) aims to strengthen the academic offering to accompany students during the transition from high school to university.





Plataformas (Platforms) has resources such as the **Proof of Concept (POC)**, which, in its **POC Talent** version, aims to build an artificial intelligence tool with an algorithm fed with data from the labor market that helps high school students define their university future. On the other hand, **POC Tokenization** allows students to tokenize their audiovisual content for peer-to-peer monetization.

Among the initiatives in production, **Plataformas (Platforms)** has developed the **Marketplace de Socios Formadores (Marketplace for Formative Partners) (MPS Tec)**, comprised of challenges to bring research to the market through connections with Tecnológico de Monterrey's Institutes and attracting solutions developed as technology-based ventures. This project is in its first phase.

Another **Plataformas (Platforms)** tool is **Tooltec**, which facilitates innovation and detects different organizations' needs and interests using data logging.

The creation ecosystem solves challenges for humanity by creating communities from university networks with innovation and entrepreneurship.

This ecosystem addresses the stages of **Lifelong Creation (LLC)**, maintaining learning with formative challenges and open innovation. The resolution of challenges occurs through:

- Value connections with teams made up of smart search.
- Access to opportunities that facilitate scaling and technology transfer.
- AI to help get curated resources.

By 2025, **Plataformas (Platforms)** seeks to consolidate a version capitalizing on current resources, infrastructure, experiences, and activities.



→ **TEC4SENIORS**

The *Tec4Seniors* program, an educational initiative of Tecnológico de Monterrey designed for the elderly community, was created in August 1999 under the name "Adultos en la Universidad" (Adults at University) in the León campus, Guanajuato, to serve the market of adults over 65 years of age in that city.

The inaugural course had 80 students who enrolled in six courses. In 2005, the program extended the age range to 50 years or older and expanded its educational offering with 15 courses and an average of 220 students.

Over time, this university program for older people has evolved and adapted to meet the needs of the community of older adults in Comunidad de padres y madres TEC (Community of TEC fathers and mothers), EXATEC (Tec alumnae), and the public.

The *Tec4Seniors* program extended to the León, Querétaro, Guadalajara, San Luis Potosí, Zacatecas, Monterrey, and Sinaloa campuses.

With more than 20 years of experience and an average of 450 registered participants per semester, the educational offerings of Tec4Seniors cover various areas:

- Technology
- Health care
- Cultural development
- Personal development
- Languages
- Emotional intelligence
- Sports

The objective of *Tec4Seniors* is the formation and empowerment of older adults through various courses. Furthermore, it seeks to foster an environment of community and coexistence that generates a sense of belonging and personal productivity and a direct link with Tecnológico de Monterrey.

... foster an environment of community and coexistence that generates a sense of belonging ...

Tec4Seniors is in the modernization process to integrate new needs and lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic into its structure and academic offerings.



→ TECMILENIO

Universidad Tecmilenio is a private institution founded in 2002 in Monterrey. Its model allows students to study in an ecosystem of well-being and happiness; it has an open and customizable platform for developing and recognizing competencies and close accompaniment throughout life, according to the purpose of each student.

Tecmilenio has formal education programs with an open education offering. One of its initiatives is **the Centro de Competencias (Competence Center) (CDC)**, a digital space where the university collaborates with different companies to produce learning programs in various formats. Through methodologies, diagnostic models, and evaluation instruments, competencies are developed in those who seek to be lifelong learners. Thus, through its personalized model, CDC offers companies and learners advice, training, and mentoring tailored to their needs.

CIMA

Tecmilenio invests in generating new business models with value propositions based on the user's learning needs. For this reason, it has begun to function as an R&D (Research and Development) laboratory to generate experimental evidence that allows the production of unique and differential value propositions. For this purpose, the **CIMA** plan was created, an ecosystem with a vision for 2025 that involves **Co-creation** with companies, **Integration** into digital platforms, a **Modular** space (stackable, flexible, and accessible), and personalized, scalable **Accompaniment** (creating its acronym).

CIMA will directly attend to learners and leaders in work teams and help them develop skills.

CIMA is currently developing two resources: labor reintegration and digital professional profiles. The labor reintegration service supports people leaving their employment who must find a new job, guiding them to discover what they want to do in the next stage of their lives. This resource yields a personalized learning trajectory through technical support and automated algorithms, allowing the person to develop the necessary skills for their next job.

The system of digital professional profiles, still in the experimental phase, is committed to reducing the gap between the supply and demand of professionals to serve companies that cannot find the experts they are looking for in the market. The function of this system is to create dynamic profiles based on assessments of both workers and companies. With the information collected, the system identifies the set of skills that a professional requires and provides a guide to train people through active learning challenges.

More information on CIMA?

<https://cima2025.tecmilenio.mx/>



→ **THE LEARNING GATE**

To redefine the traditional concept of learning, Tecnológico de Monterrey created The Learning Gate, an interactive, immersive, and multidisciplinary space aimed at people who, regardless of their age, seek professional and human development through flexible and modular pathways that adapt to personal needs.

Thus, the Vice-Rector for Continuing Education at Tecnológico de Monterrey aspires to achieve the holistic vision of lifelong learning introduced by UNESCO, creating innovative study plans and models that help individuals and organizations meet their learning objectives throughout life.

The Learning Gate offers differentiated educational resources and a customizable learning model that takes the best of theory and practice.

The Learning Gate promotes the development of skills throughout life by providing:

- On-demand and personalized digital experiences: what you need, when you need it, and at your pace.
- Relevant and cutting-edge content.
- Expert feedback.
- Significant learning through the Tec de Monterrey model based on the development of competencies.
- Immediate application of what has been learned.
- Access to conferences, recommendations from industry leaders, and content on key trends.

Lifelong Learning

This on-demand transformative learning platform works with Tecnológico de Monterrey schools and external professionals to create compact ten-hour modules that allow personalization of each student's learning path. Depending on their needs, immediate interests, and role, each person finds a profile that shows them an educational path to follow; from there, they can either take the entire route or in segments. The project currently has three leadership tracks and three data science tracks and is advancing the production of another three in finance and three in marketing and sales.

... an on-demand transformative learning platform... an interactive, immersive, and multidisciplinary space... with flexible and modular pathways that adapt to the needs of each student.

The Learning Gate promotes the transformation of a person's life through exercises that require internalization, microlearning capsules, detailed material, and careful evaluation.

After five hours of theory, students must apply what they learned by facing simulated challenges. In the last two hours, the challenge is to apply what they have learned in their personal life and leave evidence of their results on the platform.

An expert in the area evaluates the performance and defines if the student can apply the theory in their reality; if so, they receive a digital badge and a physical certificate that endorses the competency and sub-competencies developed in the learning path.

While The Learning Gate focuses on lifelong learning within a professional setting, it will expand. The intention is to encourage integral human flourishing in all contexts, always favoring emotional intelligence and the balance between health, work, and life.

More Information About The Learning Gate?

<https://mylearning.tec.mx/>

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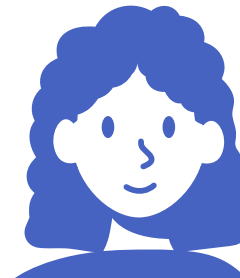
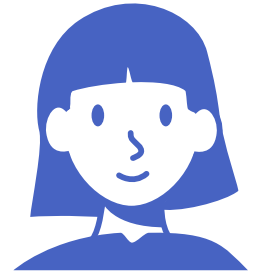
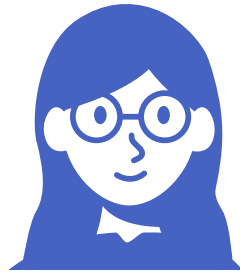
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