

New technologies support the exile from countries at war....



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RefugeesIN, coordinated by AidLearn from Lisbon is an Erasmus K2 project co-funded by European Union. Slovenian Third Age University joined this project since it is a continuation of the outstanding CINAGE, European film for active ageing project in which were involved most the current project partners. We knew that our knowledge in this study area was rather limited and that a lot of studying would be needed, but we knew as well that a lot of knowledge associated with older people and their education as well as their social inclusion can be inferred to the new study field: education of adult educators for understanding refugees, their culture, needs, and for shooting documentary films. So far, our research has generated several findings and generalisations.

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What does exile, escaping from the atrocities of war, mean? For instance, can we talk about the exile of Spaniards (these "strange strangers" said Jacques Prevert) in 1936 or shouldn't we better use the plural form "exiles?" Namely, like active ageing which can only be an individual and subjective experience, utterly different for each of us, exile as well can be but personal, individual, unstable, depending on a number of refugee's characteristics: age, sex, education, political activities, trade union activities, origin (from which country, region, town?) and depending on the political and other events in the host country.

Refugees' identity can be constructed only through the eyes of the OTHER. Their identity is rather individual than social or group identity. Therefore one can only talk about each single refugee and not refugees, each single exile and not exiles in plural. Education and processes of inclusion should take this into account.

On the other hand refugees can be viewed and understood in a fair number of ways, not just one! The administration tries to organise soldiers who treat refugees in their military way trying to maintain prison discipline in the camps. Local authorities can show coldness dealing with refugees. Local inhabitants can treat refugees differently as well: friendly, with compassion, hatred, despise, fear.. There can even be unhealthy curiosity, with some families observing refugees through the fence of the camps.

In any case, refugees exiled from their country at war had been used to a certain type of light, certain noises, and certain food which they cannot find in the new country. They feel to be somehow disturbing local people, but they cannot just melt into the new culture. In new places with new people, they are searching what might be familiar to them. They cannot just become new men. This is simply not possible! They struggle to hear, since strings of words, let alone single words do not exist for them at the beginning. Even physical environment with all the shops, inscriptions etc. can be aggressive for them. Have you ever thought about this?

They remain connected with their families through new technologies and they more easily decide to become refugees. Oh, one thought more; "Exile is passed down to the descendants, from grandfather to father and son...."