

INTRODUCTION

We present our readers a publication bringing the most recent research works on elders, their lives at work and in the family. We rely on the results we have arrived at during our work on the VEGA project No. 1/0124/2012: *Life Perspectives, the Meaning of Life, Satisfaction and Social Saturation of Elders in Slovakia and Abroad*, and the VEGA project No. 1/0349/17 titled: *The Causes and Consequences of Ageism and the Animosity between Generations in and outside the Workplace*. The above project was realized at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Prešov in Prešov. It was implemented particularly in cooperation with Mgr. Marta Adamczyk from the Department of Psychology of Humanitas University in Sosnowiec and with the associate professor Ludmila Maximova from the Department of Psychology of Ural State Pedagogical University in Yekaterinburg.

Individual chapters are built upon theoretical background and brief summary of research findings of other researchers we considered relevant to our present studies.

The issue of elders is a topic which will never become outdated. The approach employed by society to the solution of the actual issues of elders is often very diverse and inconsistent. The views of elders held both by younger generations and the elders themselves, whether at home or at work, not forgetting prejudices, myths and stereotypes associated with old age, are surprisingly manifold.

Having engaged in partial research projects, we strived to find a reply to the question concerning who elders are and to other related questions: How can we adapt to this stage of life? What are the benefits and disadvantages of ageing? What do elders gain and what do they lose? How do they feel, what are they worrying about or what makes them happy? Why is ageism on the increase and what is the cause of it?

We were also curious about how the life of elders is abroad. We managed to survey this in Russia and Poland. This was also a part of our initial research objective. Whereas the topic also caught the attention of our colleagues from abroad, we were asked to provide our research instruments to the psychologists from Uzbekistan and Israel, which we were delighted to do. We believe that in the future we will be able to complement our research surveys with this undoubtedly interesting information.

The data for so extensively designed research work could not be collected without the help and cooperation of other colleagues in Slovakia who participate in both grant projects and, naturally, also the colleagues from abroad. Therefore, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to doc. PhDr. Gabriela Kravčáková, PhD., Mgr. Jana Lukáčová, PhD., PhDr. Elena Pavlůvčíková, PhD., Mgr. Lenka Maskaľová, and our foreign colleagues doc. Natália Leonenko, prof. Leonid Kulikovov, doctor of philosophy from Saint Petersburg State University, doc. Ľudmila Maximová from the Ural State Pedagogical University in Yekaterinburg and her helpful colleagues, and to Mgr. Marta Adamczyk from Humanitas Univesity in Sosnowiec, and to the students of those universities for their willingness to take part in our research project and the enthusiasm they put into it. Last but not least, our thanks also go the the managing employees of elderly day care centres in Slovakia, Poland, Russia and the respondents – elders for their patience and willingness to complete questionnaires and for their willingness to share their life stories with us. They allowed us to dive deeper into what makes them happy and what worries them. The collection of data across three generations was an interesting and useful path to take, and not just because of the research itself. Having interacted with young workers and university students, we were delighted to see their interest in this issue, even if they commented upon elders with criticism. Important for us was the finding that they started to think about ageing and old age, which is the first step to realise that youth and good physical shape is only temporary.

We believe and wish that our publication would catch the attention of both the experts and students of social and human sciences, and the wider public.

Authors