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TALES2SHARE:

Promoting Lifelong Learning of Elderly Women Through the Upgrade of Adult Educators' Methodologies for Inclusive, Accessible and Participatory Communities

Report Senior Women BG

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Form for elderly women

Note: not all questions have to be asked.

FORM

DESCRIPTION & FORMAT		*Answer column*
	Way of recruitment of the participants	The participants were recruited by an invitation at senior group in the village that gathers every Saturday.
	Way of conduct	Physical conduct Opening – 20 minutes, discussion over 1h and 30 minutes
	Number of participants	7 senior women over 65 years
	Moderator	Velina Dragiiska
	Date and location of the conduct	08.06.2024; Bulgaria, Vladaya 1641; st.
	Profile of participants (native, migrant, other) Be specific	The participants were natives of the Republic Bulgaria from a remote area outside Sofia, generally lacking senior opportunities. They were women over the age of 65 .

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ENGAGEMENT QUESTIONS (not mandatory)	Why did you decide to join the innovative forum?	The participants shared that they wanted to join this innovative forum because they were informed about the project purpose. They expressed interest communicating with younger people within the projects' context. Other aspect of their motivation was their desire to meet new people and also because they wanted to express their perspective on the issue of senior inclusion and their related to it experience.
	What would you like to have as take-aways from the innovative forum?	
	Do you have any expectations you would like to share before we start?	The participants didn't express any particular expectations or questions prior to the forum start.
EXPLORATION QUESTIONS	What does being "included" in society mean to you? What are the benefits and privileges that come with it?	One participant shared that to her being "included" in a society means knowing the people around you and in your community and to be able to contact them freely. Another participant shared that having friends from that society again means that you are accepted in it. In the course of the conversation all the participants agreed that it is of great benefit to be accepted in a given society and to also feel accepted. They stive to have a level of certainty that if they need help or assistance they will be able to receive it. Focus was also put on the issue of trust between the people in a given community and on "feeling good" when talking to someone.
	How would you describe the feeling of being "excluded" from society? What are the disadvantages and drawbacks that come with it?	One participant shared her story that when she first moved to live at the village, that her neighbors ignored her every time she wanted to say "hallo". After 10 years they finally started to talk with her and even became friends. The long way towards integration was challenging to her. The other participants shared that to her people always have been friendly in general terms.
	Can you share your experience of living in this community? What have been the biggest challenges you faced?	

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Could you share your experience of being excluded, or being included in your current community?	. An important aspect to them is that they need to share interests and values with other people so they can feel included in a true way. They said that society must unite people. " You should be able tofind what you need and especially what your soul needs"
How do you typically spend your time? Are there activities or programs you wish were available?	The participants shared that they typically spend their time at home because they have the belief that they are too old and can't go anywhere. One of the participants said that she would love it if there were more programs where old people are talking to young people and they both share their experience. Another participant shared that she would like more programs where you can share music and read books with other people.
What kind of support or resources would help you feel more included and engaged in the community?	
Have you had opportunities to share your background and experiences with others in the community? If so, how was it received?	They gather at the local church wherethey spend time to communicate with each other and share their current challenges. Normally they would try to help and support each other. Il
What would you recommend us to include in our training program?	As representatives of senior people, our participants shared that they would be glad if there is more interaction with yonder people They say that the contact with young people provides them with energy and make them feel good. Another thing they love and recommend to be included is some element of music. They share that music has a very good effect on a person's soul and communication between people. They recommend that even for a little of the time during these meetings there should also be time for some music. More further focus was put on their digital literacy issues. Most of them shared they need assistance in using smartphones, laptops or even TV. They shared desire to be able to communicate with other people via the modern communicational tools, but at the moment this is a substantial barrier.

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	What are some activities or programs that you think could help improve inclusion and engagement for women like yourself?	One participant said that they should be more happy if they events and activities almost every day. She said that they would like to talk more about the things they like and share their experience with each other (cooking; watching kids; books; films and others.) Other participant shared that when they have young people around them it is easier to talk and to be themselves. " It's like feeling young again". Another participant said that if they knew how to use the internet, the tv or a laptop it would be much easier to have their time together. They digital skills were put once more in the context of inclusion as a major barrier.
EXPLORATION QUESTIONS	Have you ever participated in digital storytelling or similar activities? If yes, what was your experience like?	Every Sunday as friends they have an online call using "Viber" where they communicate and share their recent experience. However this contact is quite limited to the people in their circle.
	What kind of training or support would you need to feel confident in sharing your story digitally?	All the participants shared that they need to acquire more digital skills. How to use their phones, to search on the internet and share things online. Another barrier they identified was story telling format and guidelines on how to conduct such storytelling directed to online audience.
	What are your goals for the future in terms of personal development and community involvement?	
	If you could design a program for elderly women in your situation, what key elements would it include?	Besides the digital literacy and language barrier they address in using digital tools, they suggested that a variety of topics must be included (Heath, children, general digital communication, communication with people with different backgrounds, values, experience with different groups, etc)

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		They suggested that the blended form of online and offline communication is prefered to them. Very important note was that they would propose to have more contact with people who share their stories and are from differet backgrounds (ethnicity, reliogion, country of origin). They wished to be introduced to others customs and traditions, thus enriching their knowledge and exchanging worldview.
	Do you have any comments or recommendations?	The participants shared that they are extremely happy and fascinated by the project we told them about - Tales2Share. "We hope the project can grow as fast as possible so that you can help more people because we need you."
	What is the story you wish to tell the world?	
Personal notes of the moderator After the conduct of the forum		The participants were a bit worried at first before we started. After they found out about the project and what it was they were very joyful and happy. They started asking more questions and answering the questions with interest.

Conclusions of the moderator/facilitator:

(please write your conclusions here)

Based on the senior women' feedback, several key themes emerged that should be incorporated into the training program for inclusion via digital storytelling.

The primary area of focus should be on digital literacy and accessibility. This includes providing training on the use of smartphones, tablets, and computers, with a particular emphasis on basic digital skills such as navigating the internet. The training should also include hands-on sessions to build confidence and competence. It is crucial to ensure that the digital storytelling tools and platforms are senior-friendly, with large text, clear instructions, and intuitive interfaces.

Another significant aspect is the integration of storytelling techniques. Participants should be taught the basics of storytelling, including how to structure a story and convey a compelling message. Encouraging them to share their personal narratives will help highlight the value of their unique experiences. Providing guidelines on various storytelling formats suitable for digital sharing.

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Social interaction and community building are essential components of the training program. Facilitating intergenerational programs where seniors and younger people can interact and share stories will provide a sense of connection and energy to the participants. Regular group discussions and activities should be organized to foster a sense of community and mutual support. Additionally, incorporating cultural exchange activities will help participants appreciate diversity and enrich their understanding of different customs and traditions.

Finally, emotional and psychological support should be prioritized to ensure participants feel valued and accepted within their community. Activities aimed at building trust and connection among participants will help create a positive and supportive environment. Addressing the feelings and challenges of social exclusion and providing strategies to overcome these barriers will be beneficial. Integrating music into the sessions, even briefly, can uplift spirits and enhance communication. Offering regular activities and a blend of online and offline communication methods will keep participants engaged and connected. Providing ongoing technical support and resource materials will help them navigate digital tools confidently. By incorporating these elements, the training program can effectively promote inclusion through digital storytelling and enhance the engagement and sense of community among senior women.

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