



Internationalisation  
in Higher Education  
for Society

# >>> International lectures at the Classes for Senior Citizens

#IHES project

University seniors' is an implemented program at the URV and includes presentations and talks on different aspects of multi-culturalism, led by our international community, to complement the lectures already scheduled throughout the academic year in several regions. Tentatively, this project preview two separate activities:

- 1) Talks on international topics (other cultures, Brexit, etc.)
- 2) Talks by outgoing Erasmus students to share their international mobility experience.

The project is run by the Office of Social Engagement-Classes for Senior Citizens. The activities took place throughout the year 2022 with a talk lasting approx. 1 hour. The activities take place at municipal premises for the elderly in 23 locations.

## 1 WHAT IS THE GOAL OR REASON FOR IMPLEMENTING THE PROJECT?

The reason for implementing the project stems from the idea to help to make the SDGs a reality, in the SDG3 Good health and well-being and specifically, with the goal SDG4 about Quality education in order to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

The project pretends to foster the international factor in the URV Senior University to spread the internationalisation of the university towards the general public situated within the 60 to up age band. In our region.

The main IHES targets are:

- get to know other realities
- share experiences
- transmit an international vision
- improving languages activities
- extend new world knowledge
- raise awareness of the fact that the constant changes in our society take place at a global level

## 2 WHO ARE THE BENEFICIARIES?

This target group is general public included in the age group from 60 to up band. This senior group is within Spanish society a very important demographic majority (baby boom) and is a quite can contribute to be agents of social change because is an educated generation, maybe the majority not have at an university level but they have secondary education and intellectual interests.

They are elderly people who enrolled in the regular URV' senior University programme during academic year 2022-23.

On a more structural level, it wants to Integrate the elderly into higher education and to realise contact between the elderly and young people for mutual enrichment.



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## 3 WHO ARE THE PARTNERS IN YOUR UNIVERSITY?

The lecturers or facilitators are expertise in some subject and they are selected by in the issues of interest expressed by this group as well as subjects detected as a learning area of interest by the people in charge or by the same collective. The actors are former university teachers, academics, writers, speeding up citizens, experts and scientists. Actors receive collaborations certificates if demanded.

## 4 HOW DID YOU REALISE THIS PROJECT?

During the European project proposal about IHES the URV coordinating unit detected the activity Seniors University (SU) as an activity with a big potential and susceptible to be a focus of internationalisation of the territory. In fact, it was already doing so unconsciously, but it was important to detected it because they can put more emphasis in the international factor and being self-conscious about the capacity to be a forum where internationalisation could have a multiplying effect was seen.

After the training seminar in July 2021, the SU director with their team planned the new year programme looking for the incorporation of international ideas as:

- lectures taught by international students about international experiences
- lectures about international writers, artists, traditions, culture, geography and so on.
- languages course and lecture clubs with international writers where the moderation explodes the sense it has for the country and other international remarkable aspects.

With this internal exercise it was detected and labelled all the SU actions able to be IHES and although we could not set up successful all the proposals, we could open our mind to the IHES concept in this civil engagement.



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## WHAT ARE THE MOST RELEVANT ENABLERS OF THIS PROJECT AND HOW DID YOU CONVINC THEM TO PARTICIPATE?

The classes for the elderly are a social project promoted by the main Catalan universities that aims to output the cultural concerns of the elderly.

The URV, from its civic engagement policy, is aware of the importance of their relationship with the social environment and therefore it is fully involved with it. For this reason, it has based in the Social Engagement Office a unit in charge of Senior University made up of three people. It also aims to provide an alternative to leisure time of the main protagonists of this initiative, the elderly, leading them to stay abreast of new knowledge in many different fields, and especially for those in which they show interest and with emphasis in international issues.

In recent years, the classes for the elderly have been multiplying in Catalonia and have encouraged a large increase in the number of participants. In the province of Tarragona, the initiative has been highly successful and the number of classrooms and participants has increased. So far there are Classrooms in Tarragona, Reus, Valls, el Vendrell, Cambrils, Tortosa, Amposta, Vila-seca, Flix, Deltebre and Horta de Sant Joan, with an amount of almost 2,000 students in the 23 municipal premises locations.

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## WHAT WERE THE MAIN OBSTACLES YOU ENCOUNTERED AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THEM?

Growing the URV Senior University (SU) into the IHES concept has been one of the most rewarding actions of the laboratory in Catalonia.

Once the (SU) organization realised that internationalisation was not just about communicating or learning in another language and knew that they were already doing significant work on internationalisation at home, this initiative quickly acquired the IHES label. The biggest obstacles were to be able to incorporate the experiences of mobility students into the programme in a short period of time, which were finally discarded for the time being but left as a pending issue for the future.

Another kind of challenge was to adapt the internationalisation to the interests of the target group, but it turned out that internationalisation is one of their priority areas.

Finally, we can say that perhaps we have to overcome the digital barrier of the senior group, for example to do online surveys with their phones and it required us to prepare them on paper, transfer the results to digital support and make pens so that they could fill them in!



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## WHAT WERE THE KEY "DO'S AND DON'T'S" THAT YOU LEARNED WHILE SETTING UP AND RUNNING THIS PROJECT?

### **Do's:**

- Establish the everyone role
- Try to following the plan
- Be realistic with timelines and agenda
- Trust in your colleagues
- Do not ignore different situations
- Track progress I share information

### **Don't's:**

- Ignore cultural and social differences
- Take your eye off the scope
- Forget recognise the efforts
- Make assumptions and not to ask
- Forget to listen
- Ignore bad news
- Do not burn bridges
- Underestimate anything during the activity development