



# Implementation of social and educational projects at Universities

## Implementación de proyectos sociales y educativos en las universidades

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#### ABSTRACT:

The article raises the question of social and educational projects implementation in higher education. The authors present the concept of creating an open social and educational environment, based on the ideas of social design and the convention of generations with a coordination center in the structure of the pedagogical university implemented in Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University. The paper presents courses development for various categories of population. Due to emerging tendency to increase the role of information technology in the life of every citizen, the article focuses on the education of older people for whom computer mastering is difficult. The results of a study conducted after the implementation of computer literacy courses for retired people are presented.

**Keywords:** social and educational project, student, courses, educational environment, competence approach

#### RESUMEN:

El artículo plantea la cuestión de la implementación de proyectos sociales y educativos en la educación superior. Los autores presentan el concepto de crear un entorno social y educativo abierto, basado en las ideas de diseño social y la convención de generaciones con un centro de coordinación en la estructura de la universidad pedagógica implementada en la Universidad Pedagógica Estatal de Nizhny Novgorod. El artículo presenta cursos de desarrollo para diversas categorías de población. Debido a la tendencia emergente a aumentar el papel de la tecnología de la información en la vida de cada ciudadano, el artículo se centra en la educación de las personas mayores para las que es difícil dominar las computadoras. Se presentan los resultados de un estudio realizado después de la implementación de cursos de alfabetización informática para personas jubiladas.

**Palabras clave:** proyecto social y educativo, estudiante, cursos, entorno educativo, enfoque de competencias.

## 1. Introduction

Modern educational environment of higher educational institutions is subject to the requirements of the new Federal State Educational Standards which changed the approach to understanding the learning process. The shift in competence paradigm marked the beginning of global transformations. Higher schools have changed from traditional education where a theoretical element was the theoretical amount of students' knowledge to blended learning which implies a large bias towards practice (Braine et al, 2013). Each student must now master necessary set of competencies that he can successfully put into practice. In this regard, many specific features of the educational process appeared (Ilyashenko et al, 2018). For example, the teacher's role in a student's life has changed (Bicheva et al, 2017). The teacher, as we have already indicated above, is no longer a simple knowledge transmitter; he has become a partner for his students. His role now is to guide and show students how to build their educational trajectory in order to acquire competencies for their future professional activities. In this case, a significant role is played by practice place for students (Abramova et al, 2018). Therefore, interested persons who are outside of the educational institution (Arkhipova et al, 2018) have actively begun to be involved in educational process. The relevance of the work lies in finding a new, more intensive way that helps not only students but also others to acquire competencies and necessary knowledge (Ilyashenko et al, 2018). Therefore, Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University began social and educational projects implementation that are beneficial for all

## 2. Methodology

The paper presents the development of courses at Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University for various categories of population. In connection with the emerging tendency to increase the role of information technology in the life of every citizen, we focus on the education of older people for whom computer mastering is difficult (Ilyashenko et al, 2018). The university is implementing computer literacy courses "Accessible Environment: Improving Computer Literacy". In 2018 a group of 289 people took part in the courses (Manikandan et al, 2018). After that, it was revealed what areas of computer literacy citizens were interested in. Work with documents took the leading place.

### 2.1. Social and educational projects implementation in Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University.

Our University, as one of the leading universities in the region, has been implementing the Transformation Program into the University Center for Social Development of Nizhny Novgorod Region since 2017 (being a participant in the priority federal project "Universities as Centers of Innovation Space") (Agyu et al, 2018). As part of the Transformation Program implementation, the University's Minin Center for Social Development of the Region implements projects aimed at combining efforts of social and educational activities in the region and promoting the growth of comprehensive involvement of population and organizations of the region in solving tasks of sustainable socio-economic development of Nizhny Novgorod Region and the Russian Federation (Smirnova et al, 2017). One of such projects is social and educational environment "Territory of Opportunities" development which involves solving the problem of strengthening social ties between generational communities at the regional level through creative and professional interaction. A regional system of educational and social partnership in an open public space was created (Ajeenkya et al, 2014).

The key element in the formed system ensuring effective implementation of the project, is social and educational center "Territory of Opportunities" based at our University, which unites teachers and university students, city residents, representatives of commercial and non-profit organizations, organizations of the system of general and additional education and implements their activities in accordance with the model of collaborative economy (sharing economy), based on the mutual trust, capitalization of unused resources (and, consequently, more efficient use of available resources), widespread use of digital technology, including the establishment and maintenance of the participants' contacts (Kutepov et al, 2017).

The subjects of social educational projects implementation can be authorities, political parties and movements, commercial and non-profit organizations, educational organizations (Lubov et al, 2018). Social educational projects are aimed at acquiring or developing useful skills, forming competences in various areas, contribute to the formation of active citizenship, a certain world view and help to revive awakening of interest in certain topics (Bulaeva et al, 2018). The target audience of social educational projects can be citizens of different ages who have active citizenship, a high level of discipline, a desire to get new knowledge and participate in community work (Vaganova et al, 2017) ;. Youth audience is more focused on career-oriented projects whereas middle-aged audience is interested in expanding information horizons, older people tend to acquire knowledge that will help them adapt to various innovations or fill in missing knowledge (Pavlov et al, 2016).

The logic of the project implementation was as follows:

- priority training of students successfully implementing supplementary education courses for people of different age and levels of training in the field of demanded technological and socially significant areas (Barber et al, 2013);
- creation of a volunteer student association (Smirnova et al, 2017). Before volunteers take up their direct responsibilities they must undergo appropriate training which includes not only the development of the content of additional education programs but also competences for their teaching activities development ( Ilyashenko et al, 2018);
- direct students` implementation of social projects with the help of teachers for people of different age categories: schoolchildren, students, interested persons, older people (Markova et al, 2018).

Social and educational center "Territory of Opportunities" implements several projects. As part of these projects educational courses are held to train volunteers who are participants in the Territory of Opportunities student association (Perova et al, 2017).

Courses were implemented in the following directions:

- social engineering;
- Robotics (Tsyplakova et al, 2016);
- 3D modeling (Smirnova et al, 2018).

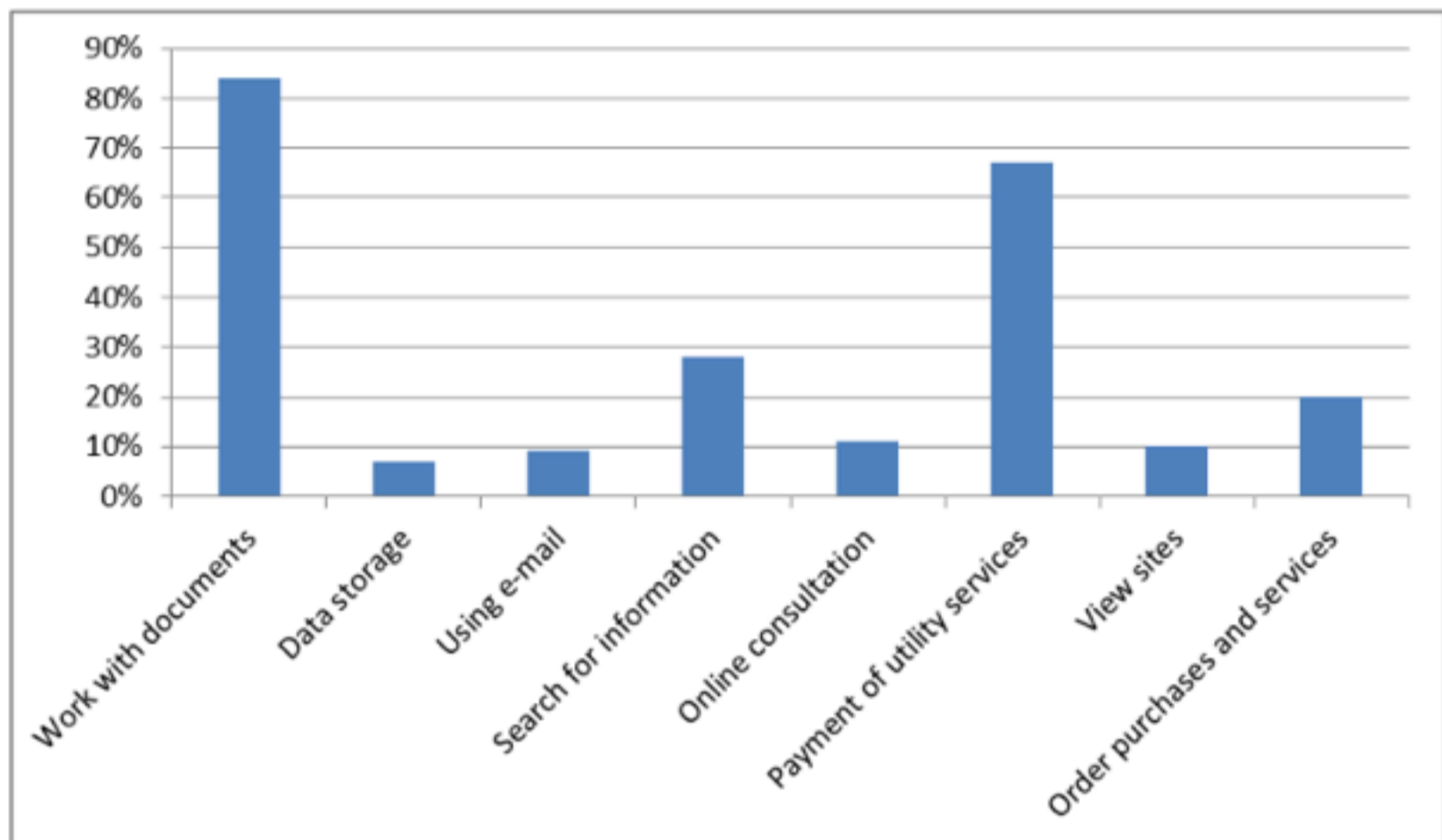
Courses fulfill the educational needs of people of different ages. They include:

- “How to become an individual entrepreneur”;
- 1c accounting;
- financial management (Vaganova et al, 2017);
- modeling and designing clothes;
- basics of cooking.

However, we want to draw attention to one of the trends that has emerged throughout the world including in Russia. In recent decades, there has been an increase in the proportion of older people in the population of many countries (Vaganova et al, 2018). In Russia, 22% of the population is of retirement age (Smirnova et al, 2018). This figure exceeds the number of children and adolescents. At the same time, the share of Russian pensioners with computer skills is small (according to sociologists). This figure is about 9% today. The issues of financial literacy of the population are becoming increasingly relevant. As part of working with older people courses “Accessible Environment: Improving Computer Literacy” have been developed and implemented.

The experiment was attended by 289 elderly people. The results of the development of computer courses are presented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**  
The degree of development of courses (number of people in %)



### 3. Results

Thus, the proposed approach to create open social and educational environment allows us to achieve positive results for all the participants in the project:

- obtain additional competencies and satisfy individual educational needs for a wide range of stakeholders of various ages;
- create a base of practices for university students;
- to create conditions to develop active citizenship among university students when working as part of volunteer corps of student association “Territory of Opportunities” in the implementation of socially significant projects;
- to ensure effective use of educational organizations resources of the city and region when solving socially important tasks;
- to create conditions for the system of social partnership of educational organizations development attracting potential employers, regional authorities for the implementation of additional educational programs for people of different generations to ensure comfortable living conditions for citizens of different age in the region;
- create conditions for productive interaction of persons belonging to different generations in the course of educational activities.

#### 3.1. Results of the study

Our proposed projects have a positive impact on the development of social and educational environment of the university and the region as a whole.

## 4. Conclusions

It was found that the courses conducted by the institution of higher education make it possible to benefit for all participants, not only those who came to study, but also the organizers and all interested persons. Students receive a large amount of practice, acquire competencies. Students acquire additional skills and they need to carry out a full-fledged life activity in the modern world. Organizations acquire new qualified employees. In general, social projects implemented by the university bring positive results.

### 4.1. Suggestions

Since the courses developed by Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University showed their relevance to a large number of people, we consider it expedient to develop this activity in higher education in the future, improving process management and attracting new stakeholders.

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