

Report

Quick Scan of Policy and Research Documents on Empowerment and Participation of Older Citizen in Lithuania

For the project “From Isolation to Inclusion: Promoting Innovation in Re-Integrating Older Citizens into Community Life”

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Content

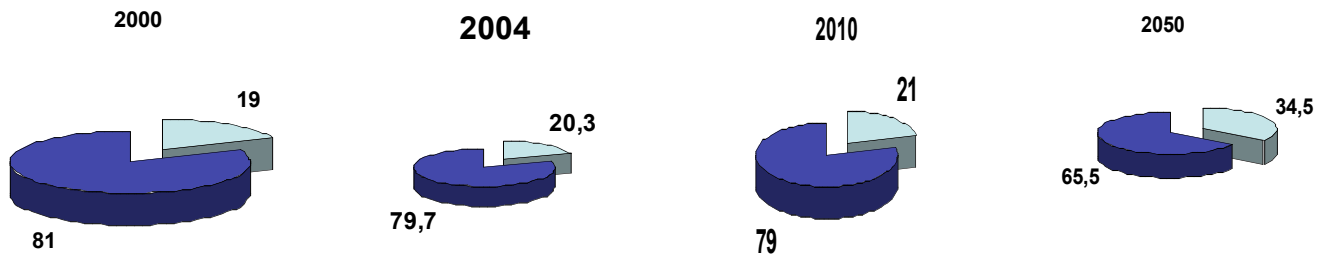
1. Introduction	3
2. Demographical situation in Lithuania	3
3. Policy documents under review	4
4. Empowerment and participation of older citizens in policy documents	4
5. Research documents under review	7
6. Empowerment and participation of older citizens in research documents	7
7. Examples for initiatives by and for older citizens	8
8. Actors operating for interests of older people	10
9. Innovative ideas to promote empowerment and participation of older citizens	11
10. Conclusions	12

1. Introduction

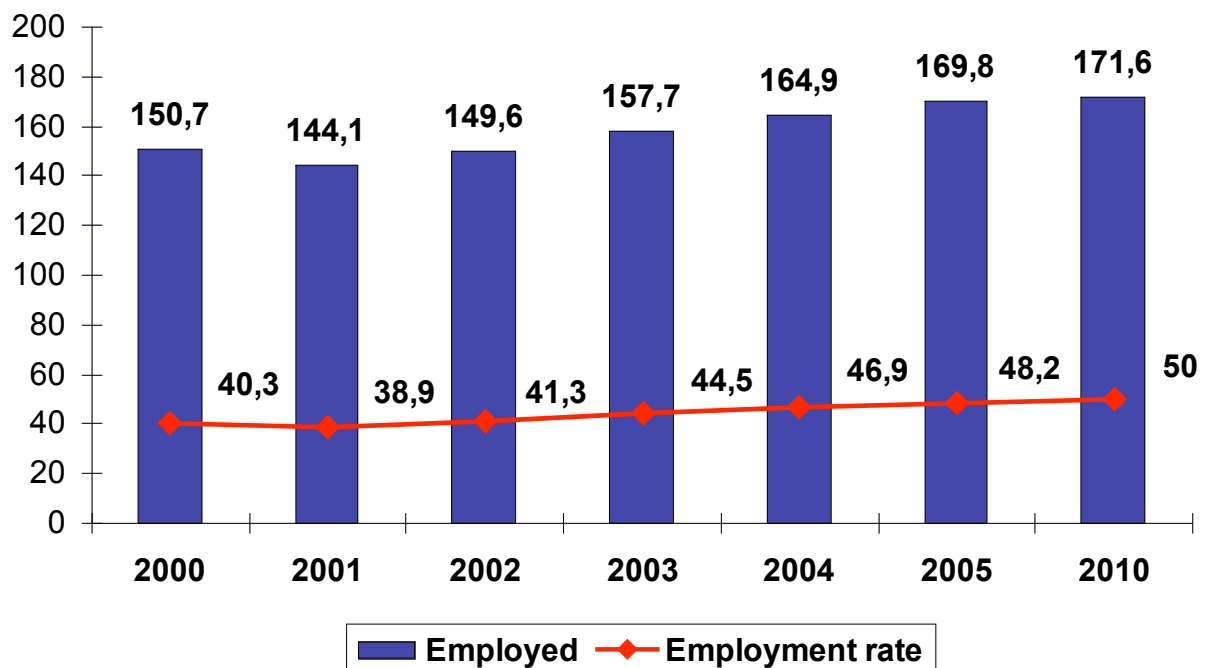
Aims of the project “From Isolation to Inclusion – Promoting Innovation in Re-Integrating Older Citizens into Community Life” is to highlight the strategies and action plans about reduction of poverty and social exclusion in different countries and to find ways of improving quality of life of elderly people. This report covering the situation in Lithuania is done by Mr. Albertas Slekys , head of department of Labour Market and Equal Opportunities of Ministry of Social Security and Labour of Lithuania and Ms.Nijole Arbaciauskiene – chair of NGO Elderly Woman’s Activities Centre.

2. Demographical situation in Lithuania

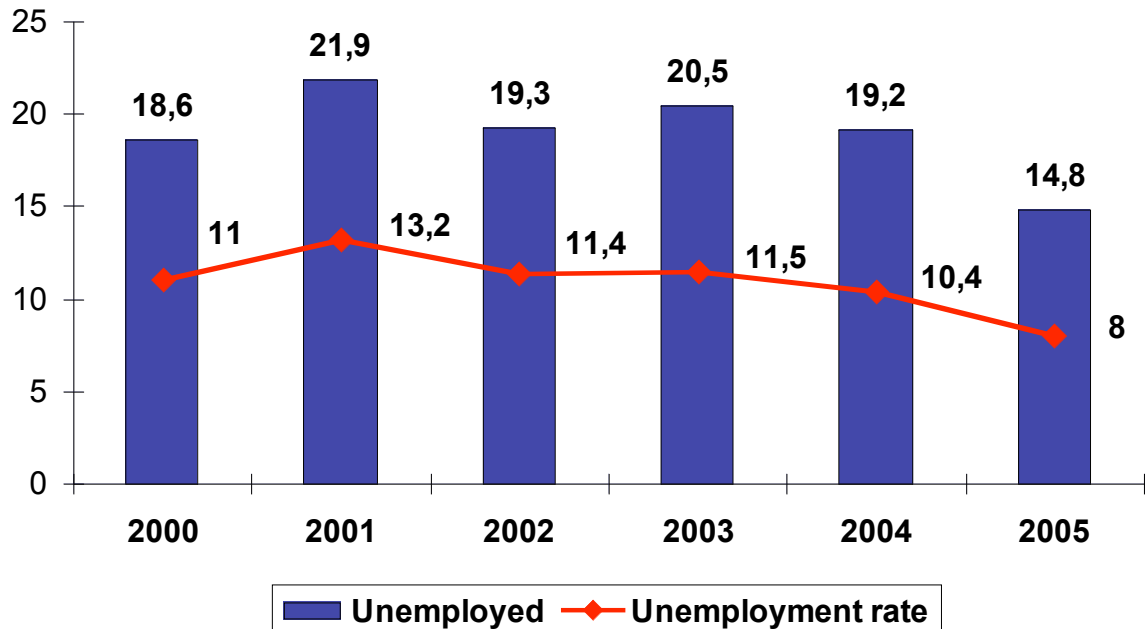
Residents aged 60+
Share of population



Residents aged 55 - 64
Employment



Residents aged 55 - 64
Unemployment



Demographic changes in Lithuania are similar with demographic situation in other European countries. Percentage of elderly people is growing up quicker than employment rate of older persons. Quantity of employable people is going down. To pay stable pensions, taxes have to become higher or retired persons have to be left in labor market. In that case it is important to develop the system of learning for elderly people and create consultative bodies helping to avoid critical situations.

3. Policy documents under review

- National Action Plan for Employment 2004
- National Action Plan Against Poverty and Social Exclusion in 2004-2006 and Action Plan for 2005-2006
- National Lisbon Strategy Implementation Program 2005-2008
- National Demographic Policy for 2005-2007 Implementation Program
- National Strategy for Overcoming Consequence of Population Aging and Action Plan for 2005-2013
- State Programme for Equal Opportunities to Women and Men for 2005-2009
- EQUAL Community Initiative Program for Lithuania 2004-2006

• The **National Action Plan for Employment 2004** contains political obligations and key measures of the Government which are applied in implementing the national employment policy in observance of the employment policy guidelines and general recommendations for Lithuania approved by the Council. One of the key measures - strengthening social cohesion and inclusion. The Government is seeking to enable each resident of the country, who is willing and able to work, to guarantee with his work the adequate subsistence level for himself. Social policy, which is being reformed, developed and implemented to this end, guarantees protection for all residents of the

country against the most important social risk factors and promotes motivation for economic activity.

- In the **National Action Plan Against Poverty and Social Exclusion in 2004-2006 and Action Plan for 2005-2006** Lithuania undertook to implement measures facilitating coordination of actions and policies aimed at combating poverty and reducing social exclusion. To this end, during the budget procedure priority is given to social inclusion objectives, seeking social orientation of the budget to the highest possible extent. In preparing the NAP against Poverty and Social Exclusion and implementing its measures, particular attention devoted to cooperation with social partners and NGOs. Lithuania's goal for the nearest 10-12 years to come is to reduce poverty and social exclusion and to combat critical poverty. Coordination of social insurance and social support measures is carried out with a view to: guaranteeing the wide social protection of residents; increasing the standard amount compensating income, which is guaranteed by social insurance benefits, and in particular, by pensions; ensuring that social support measures are well-targeted and of adequate amount so that individuals who benefit from them are able to receive income which does not humiliate human dignity.

- Lithuania in the **National Lisbon Strategy Implementation Program 2005-2008** for achieving a new strategic goal for the EU for 10 years "*to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world*", by speeding up technological progress, development of information society, completion of necessary economic reforms and minimising social exclusion., has identified three national priorities in order to promote economic growth and increase job creation. In macroeconomic area - to sustain fast economic growth, stable macroeconomic environment and to seek full - fledged membership in the EMU; in microeconomic area - to promote the competitiveness of Lithuanian companies and in employment area - to promote employment and investments in human capital. Among measures to implement national priorities are: to develop services provided to community members; retain experienced employees in the labour market as long as possible by applying a flexible retirement system; improve health status; promote integration of social risk persons into the community life and labour market by broadening infrastructure of services and increasing access to them; enhance social partnership to ensure employment security; restructure lifelong training system after compulsory education; evaluate (by investigation) the financial opportunities of partial (gradual) retirement schemes for elderly people and application of partial employment models.

- In the **National Demographic Policy for 2005-2007 Implementation Program** main measures bring under priorities. Welfare of the family - stimulating cooperation of the Government, Municipalities and NGO to meet needs of families and supporting responsibility of local communities. Public health - creating favorable surrounding for healthy life and analyzing influence of different factors to the health. Migration – putting in practice common shelter politics of EU and reducing illegal migration

- In the **National Strategy for Overcoming Consequence of Population Aging and Action Plan for 2005-2013** measures of the program linked with main priorities. Guaranty of income – estimation of pensions and dole, and analyzing the benefits of income to the families and lonely persons. Employment – putting in practice principle “Gain who negotiate” arrange joint agreements and action plans with elderly people NGO, developing informal teaching for adults. Health and social services – developing infrastructure of social services, establishing community centres in rural area, improving skills of social workers, securing care of elderly people at home, rendering integral social care and nursing services at home, increasing quality of the services. Possibilities to improve quality of life – support for renovation of apartment houses, adaptation of the flats for

elderly, development of art skills, adapting the public transport for elderly population, safeguard of elderly against violence in the families and outside the home.

- In the **State Programme for Equal Opportunities to Women and Men for 2005-2009** identified the main objectives to resolve equal opportunities issues in all areas in a consistent, integrated and systematic way. The tasks of the Programme are the following: encourage women to take an active part in public and political life; support NGO projects (in particular projects by crisis centres) ensuring social assistance to victims of domestic violence and work with persons using violence in the family; resolve specific issues of women's and men's health; implement educational measures and measures to increase awareness on family planning and reproduction health issues, in particular in rural areas; encourage cooperation of state and government authorities, educational and academic establishments and NGOs in the area of gender equality; reinforce the institutional mechanism for implementing equal opportunities on county and municipal levels; build employees' and public servants' capacities to ensure equal opportunities; carry out an extended assessment of changes in women's and men's status. Among measures to implement of objectives are: support NGO projects on creating a comprehensive and non-stereotypic gender image in the mass media; organise of workshops on the Equal Gender Representation in Decision-Adoption on Local Level; on the role of municipalities in ensuring equal opportunities; organise a conference on the Gender Equality in Developing Democracy; conduct a study on the effect of the Structural Funds' assistance to the establishment of equal opportunities policies in Lithuania in order to attain the EU's strategic objectives in the equal opportunities area.

- **EQUAL in Lithuania** as a the common EQUAL task is the labour market with equality of opportunity and diversity, free of discrimination. EQUAL priorities in Lithuania: facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or reintegrated into the labour market which must be open for all; reconciling family and professional life, as well as the re-integrating of men and women who have left the labour market, by developing more flexible and effective structures of work organisation and support measures and helping the integration of asylum seekers. Actions of EQUAL Programme: establishing Development Partnerships (DPs), seeking and finding transnational partners, signing agreements for DP work programmes and transnational co-operation; developing DP work programmes and thematic networking, dissemination of good practice and making an impact on national policy.

4. Empowerment and participation of older citizens in policy documents

Older citizens are involved in the process of the drafting of the strategies and the process of implementation of these strategies by two ways: as a social partners or representatives of NGO. As a rule Ministry of Social Security and Labor inviting to this process such organizations:

- **Social partners:**
 - Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania
 - The Lithuanian Council for the Affairs of Disabled
 - Lithuanian Farmers Society
 - Lithuanian Trade Union Confederation "Solidarumas"
 - Council of Lithuanian pensioners
- **Non governmental organizations:**
 - Women's Issues Information Centre
 - Lithuanian Women's Union

- Elderly Women's Activity Centre
- Lithuanian Citizens Advice Union
- Women's Information and Employment Centre

5. Research documents under review

- Inquiry of possibilities for development of corporate social responsibility measures (2005)
- The situation of the elderly people on the Lithuanian labor market and the possibilities for their integration into the labor market (2004)
- Assessment of the needs for Vocational Training of Adults and its efficiency in Lithuania (2002)
- Survey of long-term unemployed of the elderly person registered in the local labor exchanges (2001)

• **Inquiring of possibilities for development of corporate social responsibility measures**
 Concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) is discussed on the base of the research. Role of World agreement for development of CSR is analyzed using main results of European Forum. Positive examples from business enterprises illustrate usefulness of CSR. Alternatives are described and benefits from CSR underlined. This leads to the better understanding of CSR of the specialists and increase reliability of the measures

• **The situation of the elderly people on the Lithuanian labor market and the possibilities for their integration into the labor market**

Social research about unemployment among persons over 55 is presented and the measures for reduction of unemployment are proposed. It is important to integrate elderly into community life and to make certain life long learning. Additional social measures would guaranty better social integration and cohesion.

• **Assessment of the needs for Vocational Training of Adults and its efficiency in Lithuania**
 The research shows that relevance of professional qualification of the personnel of enterprises are going more and more actual. 43,2 % of respondents answered that their personnel are involved into the process of training. But it is basis to affirm that this process is not organic. On the other hand it shows high perspectives of labor market professional training centers, value of they services will become higher after joining EU

• **Survey of long-term unemployed of the elderly person registered in the local labor exchanges**
 Research was done using statistical data and social interviewing. It shows situation of long-term unemployed persons in labor market. The proposals how to improve situation were given.. It was underlined in the findings that it is necessary to develop schemes of early retirement, integration I of elderly people into community life using their work experience and cultural potential.

6. Empowerment and participation of older citizens in research documents

- not involved
- participation in presentation of scientific research results and discussions

7 Examples for initiatives by and for older citizens

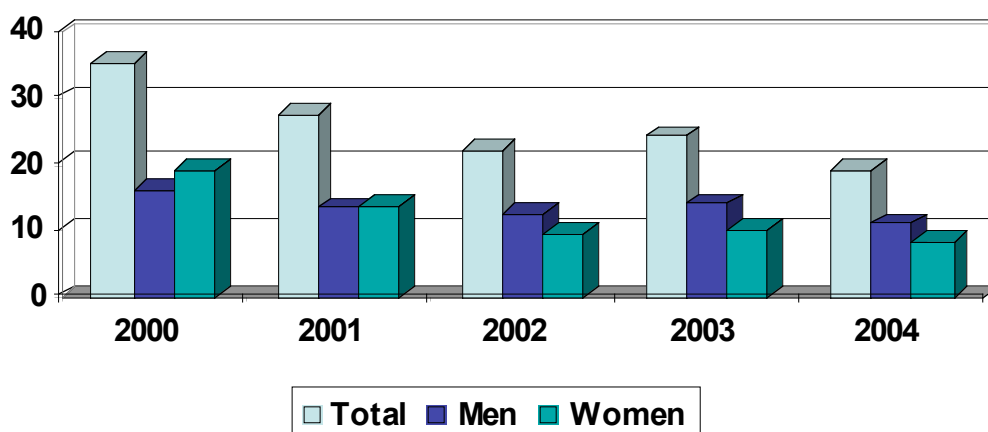
All initiatives may be presented as :

- Formal and informal activities
- Social cohesion and life quality
- Social life and volunteer activities.

Formal and informal activities

- motivation of learning necessity for older people, change of society and employers' attitude
- formation of positive attitude to work and education
- implementation of specialized consultative programs consolidating motivation to work and learn
- organization of scientific – practical conference “Work experience – work for all”
- preparation of a special program “Window to work and information ” intended to improve computer literacy
- assessment of elderly population demand to participate in formal and informal activities
- preparation (together with municipalities) target activities support programs by regions taking into consideration the demand for formal and for informal activities
- motivation of learning necessity for older people, change of society and employers' attitude
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- support to elderly farmers that gave up agricultural alternative to business
- implementation of social services demand assessment system, increase of access to psychological help

Engagement of aged citizens 65+ , thous.



Poverty level of the domestic life of the retired

Poverty level 50% (average of consumption expenses)	Domestic life of population	65-69 m.	70-74 m.	75-79 m.	80+	Domestic life of the retired
Below poverty level	16.6	17.4	18.9	18.8	33.1	17.6

Part of population 65+ that are provided social services

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Support houses	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.9
In-patient support institutions	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9
Support houses and in-patient	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.9

Social cohesion and life quality

- preparation and implementation of projects intended for prevention of social exclusion and increase of integration into society
- encouragement of the development of social enterprises and improvement of their activities
- tracking of monetary and social support provision to low-income families and single persons
- assessment of efficiency of the state benefit system and satisfaction of the demand for nursing or specific care
- publication of "Novelties of Social Support"
- assessment of the compatibility of social insurance and social support granted to volunteers
- dissipation of information about police services seeking to ensure security of elderly people

Social life and volunteer activities

Lonely aged persons

	65-69	70+
Within the country	40756	104915
In 5 major cities	14761	32532
In other localities	25995	72383

- support to non-governmental organizations encouraging them to provide free social information and legal consultations to socially isolated people
- expand functional possibilities of local society and municipalities

- conclusion of co-operation agreements with non-governmental organizations representing elderly people
- maintaining of succession and vitality of folk-lore traditions, support to cultural activities projects
- preparation of programs intended for development of independent life
- development of advanced ways of social services provision in the society while developing the network of social services within regions and municipalities
- improvement of qualification of social workers and social services organizers
- establishment of volunteers network

8. Actors operating for interests of older people

Ministry of Social Security and Labour. Mission - is to develop and implement an effective system of social assistance, social insurance and labour, harmonised with the EU standards, in order to enhance social security of Lithuanian residents.

Lithuanian Labour Exchange. Mission – is to increasing the employability of the job-seekers and providing the NATIONAL economy with the adequate labour force.

Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority. Is the largest national organisation engaged in the consistent and purposeful development of adult vocational training, guidance and counselling as active labour market policy measures for boosting employment among jobless or risk-group people and for mastering competitive skills in the labour market among the employed.

Social Institutions Supervision and Audit Department. Main activities – is to implement social service providing and obtaining these services, the relations between providers and recipients of social services, and the principles of funding of social services.

Council for the Affairs of Disabled. Main activities – is to ensure and forming social policy corresponding to the needs of the disabled and managed for medical, professional and social rehabilitation institutions, for the resolution of problems of the disabled and coordinates social integration programs.

Center for Equality Advancement. The main goals to strengthen civil society in Lithuania by: promoting consolidation of equal rights for women and men and their implementation; strengthening democracy in the country through the implementation of means encouraging equal representation of women and men's interest's in decision-making processes; promoting values of open democratic society through encouraging gender dialogue; changing negative stereotypes of women and men, age groups, national, ethnical minorities, the disabled and other social groups in the society; development and promotion of gender equality ideas and encouraging communication and cooperation of state and municipal institutions and bodies, educational institutions, science and study institutions and non-governmental organizations and through the development of joint projects and programmes in the area of equal opportunities.

Senior citizens organizations

Union of pensioners “Bociai” joins 41 000 members and have 54 departments in different places of Lithuania. They have many artistic outfits, organizing leisure activities and lobbying for bigger pensions.

Another national wide organization is **Lithuanian Association of Retired Persons (LARP)**.

Number of members is 9055, number of departments -39, number of artistic outfits- 24. Mission is via thoughtful leisure to better spiritual disposition.

Age focussed network “Gabija” is working in 10 counties of Lithuania. Mission: enabling the Non-governmental organizations working with elderly people to create a better quality life for them providing equal rights, possibilities and responsibility.

Aims :

- representation of the interests of elderly people, making influence to the Government and other state structures to adopt resolutions important to the life of elderly generation;
- sharing experience, collecting information about elderly people’s problems, searching for the ways to solve them;
- maintain relations with other NGO and state institutions;
- inform the society and state institutions about the situation relating aged people;
- organize training, seminars and discussions for the members of GABIJA network;

Member of AGE Platform

Third age universities are working in bigger cities of Lithuania. Mission : teaching

Elderly Woman’s Activities Centre - invites social active women to come together and engage in self-improvement, common realisation of individual possibilities and self-esteem. It provides social assistance on voluntary basis and seeks to create an atmosphere of psychological comfort for every individual, for members of the centre and society. Activities: education, training, information, publishing, social services, health support measures, nursing and help in critical situations, cultural, club and community work, investigation of elderly people situation and protection of their rights, stimulation of civil activity.

There are many other organizations as community centres, Women’s organizations, organizations giving social services, which are taking care of elderly population partially.

9. Innovative ideas to promote empowerment and participation of older citizens

Social cohesion and life quality

- increase of buying potential
- provision of acceptability of the means of social support and income not humiliating human dignity
- dissipation of information about social support possibilities and limitations
- co-ordination of the actions of the state, municipalities and non-governmental organizations seeking to reduce poverty and social exclusion
- support to those selecting a more reasonable lodging
- increase of availability of enterprises providing services, establishment of recreation zones and appropriate infrastructure
- improvement of services quality
- development of social services system and its availability
- development of help-at-home services
- support to non-governmental organizations that are providing informal help or social services to their members

Social life and volunteer activities

- encouragement to take part in social, cultural and political life, formation of a positive attitude of the society to aging process oriented to activity and development
- reasonable usage of professional skills and experience
- encouragement to participate in society and community's life as well as in mutual help initiatives
- encouragement to participate in cultural life, succession of cultural values
- propagation of children and youth's understanding of the contribution of elderly people to public life
- dissipation of information about participation of elderly people in public life and volunteer activities

10. Conclusions

It is necessary to :

- to work out model of cooperation for social services among GO and NGO in defining fields of activities and responsibilities of each actor.
- achieve that elderly employees remained longer in labor market
- create conditions for everyone willing and able to work and earn regardless of honorable age
- improve elderly people's image
- reduce elderly people's poverty and social exclusion, overcome particularly big poverty
- provide that any individual at old age would not remain without means of subsistence
- develop and adapt environment and lodging to the needs of elderly people
- ensure active and respectable aging
- create modern system of social services to elderly people
- implement strategy of active ageing
- consolidate understanding of the significance of the contribution of elderly people into public life
- develop volunteer activities