

Publication

Active aging through the University of the Third Age: the Brazilian model

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Author(s) de Maio Nascimento, Marcelo; Giannouli, Eleftheria

Author(s) at UniBasel [Giannouli, Eleftheria](#) ;

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This descriptive paper presents the model of the Brazilian Universities of the Third Age (U3A). In a country with 208 million inhabitants and accelerated population aging, U3A's set of regular courses, lectures, workshops and group dynamics serve as a low-cost and high-efficacy strategy that promotes lifelong education and social integration. Although their conceptual basis has been inherited from their European counterparts, over the years, Brazilian U3As have developed their own model of functioning, by adapting already existing methodologies and creating new ones matching with the needs and interests of the Brazilian older adults, in accordance with their physical and financial resources. One unique feature of the Brazilian model of U3A is the wide and diverse offer of sports and leisure activities, which is generally under the responsibility of the Physical Education courses of federal, state or private universities. Having physical activity promotion as a key element goes beyond transfer and exchange of knowledge as it also encourages active and healthy aging in a more holistic approach. Thus, in the Brazilian context, the U3A play an important role in the social and economic development of the country.

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