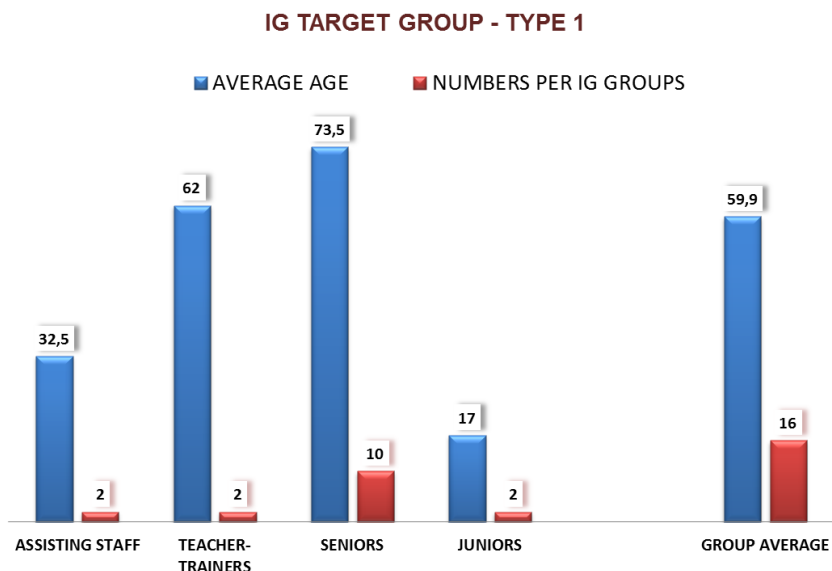




Lifestyle Variable 2 Living places

(1) Definition and characteristics of the IG Groups



TYPE 1

The SENIORS and ASSISTING STAFF belong to 2 out of 3 residential homes. However participants were not always the same.

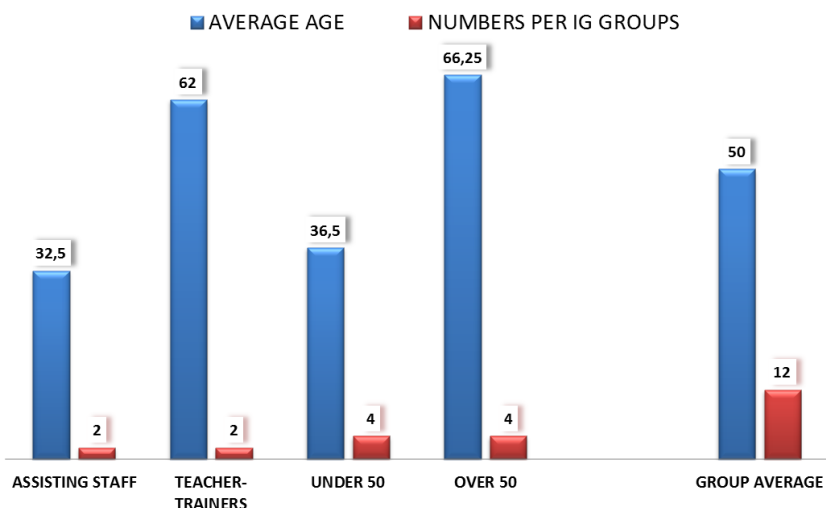
The JUNIORS are students that belong to 2 classes training to become Education Agents selected by their teacher in the Sainte Croix College of Hannut.

The total number of participants per group varied from 14 to 18 (between 28 and 36 for both institutions). The proportion of women is about 90 % and 65% of girls.





IG TARGET GROUP - TYPE 2



TYPE 2

In this mixed IG group of adults ages varied on a scale from 25 to 76 and were divided into 2 sub-groups to analyse the impact of the age factor on several perceptions related to living conditions and residence styles: ABOVE 50 and UNDER 50. See point (3).



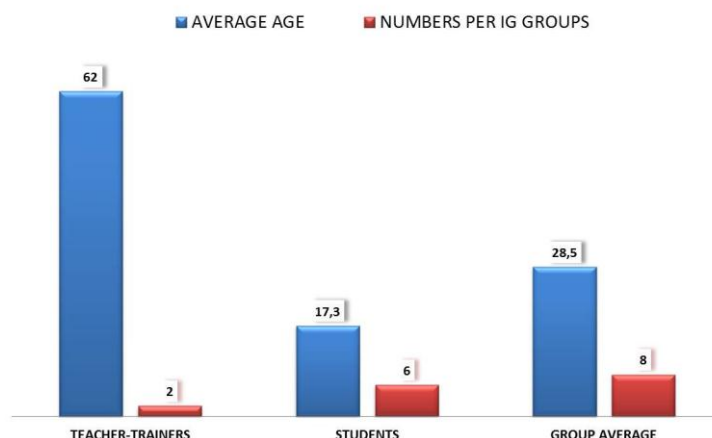
TYPE 3

A group composed of 2 teacher-trainers and 6 Education Agent students (3 boys and 3 girls) formed for interviews and debate incentive for further discussions in type 1 groups. All the students had received previous on the field training and been in contact with people in need belonging to older generations (homes for seniors, institutions for disabled persons).





IG TARGET GROUP - TYPE 3



(2) Objectives of the IG workshops

Allow participants:

- to express and describe their aesthetic preferences for home decoration and to learn about each other's tastes in matters of living conditions.
- to compare and discuss their attitudes towards country and urban living.
- to exchange their views and feelings on what makes a place attractive to live in.
- to tell each other about their lifestyles environments and their evolution and to discover the existence of relative values regarding the way people live at home in different cultures across Europe.

(3) Methodology and description of the workshop activities

Type 1 groups: activities were supervised by trainers and assisting staff. The fact that Senior participants are unable to leave their residence requires specific working methods taking this aspect into consideration. Therefore, props were used to stimulate discussions around the proposed themes: questionnaires, photographs and objects. Juniors helped Seniors to answer questions and write their answers for reporting.

Type 2 groups: following the inauguration of a new residence in Hannut workshop sessions (four afternoons including evaluation) were organised in cooperation with a local organisation providing social housing for certain families in need of a home. The training course set up and offered by Zebra was targeted towards a class of adults subdivided into 2 age groups (below and above 50). Techniques such as photo-language, survey questionnaires, role plays, case analysis and creative expression were used. The lifestyle topic concentrated on a question put forward by the learners themselves: "What makes us feel comfortable and happy at home?"



Type 3 groups: the idea was to get a group of young students express their personal views on generational lifestyles in the home, including themselves, their parents and other generations. Their opinions were collected in the form of filmed interviews to be shown to older generation members (in type1 groups) for their reaction. The principal question debated was “In your opinion what makes the difference between the lifestyles of young people today and those of previous generations, especially in the way they live at home?”



WORKSHOP I (Type 1 group): “Ornamental and aesthetics tastes in the home”

Learners were presented with a number of objects found in a flea market and asked to give their preferences for each. For example: figurines, paintings, cups and saucers, religious statuettes, etc.



As we expected the objects were more often favoured by the **Seniors** who estimated that some of them would look nice in their room, on a window sill or next to similar objects. Although the **Juniors** disliked the majority of objects they acknowledged that some could be offered as gifts to their grandparents. They were quite astonished at the relative value of tastes according to age and to fashionable objects for another generation.



A variation of this workshop was organised in the form of a game with unusual functional household objects



The objects were displayed one by one from a “mystery box” and participants had to guess what they were for: a piggy bank, a fire poker, an egg timer a candle holder, etc. As most of these objects were quite ancient, the young participants were a bit at a loss. However, all enjoyed the game and were enthusiastic to share their memories about these objects.

WORKSHOP II (Type 2 group): “Interiors: how do you feel at home?”

This training course was especially created for a group of 8 adults in search of answers to living condition questions. The intergenerational particularity stems from a subdivision into 2 age groups: **Under 50** (average = 36,5) and **Above 50** (average = 66,25). All participants, mostly women, are dissatisfied with the way they live, for personal, social or economic reasons and feel blocked in their wish for change. Frustrations arise from a lack of comfort, monotonous living conditions and an inhospitable habitat. They find consolation spending some time together to express their difficulties or simply to be with someone in a casual way.

Therefore Zebra proposed a structured course aimed at stimulating the learners' involvement in the transformation of their own living conditions and unsatisfactory lifestyles. The participants were asked to respond to various stimuli presented to them and to compare their attitudes and reactions towards different domestic lifestyles. The activities focused on psychological aspects of living and the way people feel in certain environments. The learners agreed to engage themselves fully in these activities and to respect each other's points of views, particularly from the generation stand point.



The course was developed in 5 successive stages.

STAGE 1

Responding to an example of past living conditions in a modest quarter of Brussels in the 1960's and 70's. Photographs taken at that time and today were shown with explanations as incentives for discussion.



Recorded impressions from both subgroups:

Under 50: feelings of sadness loneliness and deprivation, lack of facilities (mostly negative impressions).

Above 50: feelings of security, warmth and simplicity, presence a relationship (mostly positive impressions).

STAGE 2

Responding to a survey questionnaire on learners' self-satisfaction and perceptions of their own living conditions

- (1) Which room do you prefer in your home?
- (2) Where do you feel more at ease in your home?
- (3) In which room do you spend most of your time?
- (4) Do you go back home with pleasure?
- (5) Do you like showing your home to other persons?
- (6) Do want to change your interior?
- (7) What do you think other persons think of your home?
- (8) What would you change if you could?



The purpose of the questionnaire was not so much to draw statistics from their answers but to try and identify objects of dissatisfaction and obstacles to change.

Recorded impressions from both subgroups:

Under 50: answering the questions helped them to look at their interiors and perceptions from a different angle and to realise that some changes were possible. There is a positive connection between place and time spent which should be more take into account.

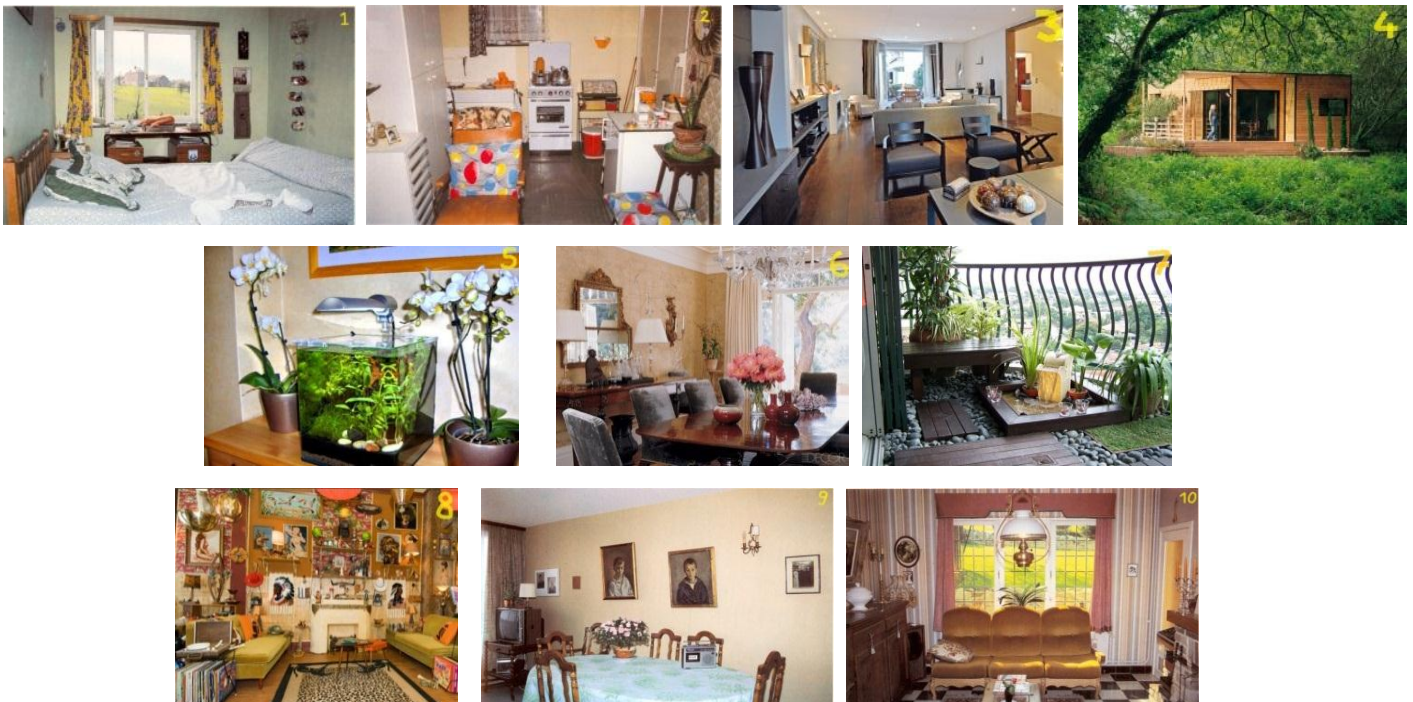
Above 5: more importance was given to relationships, due perhaps to isolation situations. There could be more satisfaction about the home if the living conditions could be shared with someone. Other people's opinions didn't count as much compared to the under 50 group.

STAGE 3

Defining a harmonious and pleasant place to live in

Learners were confronted to 10 pictures of mixed styles interiors which they had to classify in order of preference. Each person had to justify the reasons of their choices, expressing their likes and dislikes about interior styles.

The interior photographs were selected from Internet and from the Archives of Modern Architecture in Brussels (1981).





Recorded impressions from both subgroups:

Under 50: modern, spacious interiors were favoured, preferably with some connection to the “outside world”. There is a preference for not overcrowding decoration and filling rooms with “unnecessary” objects. Bright, pale soft colours are desired.

Above 50: surrounding yourself with objects and souvenirs gives a sense of ease, intimacy and connection with events or persons. Space is not an issue and colours can be vivid and contrasted.

Surprisingly the preferred environment for both groups was the same:



Attention was drawn by the curved lines of the balcony, the plants, pebbles and small candles in the glasses. The interior atmosphere is unknown but benefits from the view outside. Learners qualified the mood as “zen”.

STAGE 4

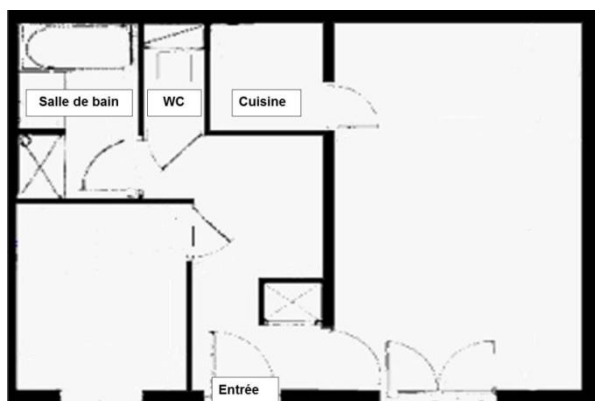
Case study and role play dramatizing a fictional situation

All learners were presented the fictional problem situation of a divorced mother (38), Arlette, with two grown up sons (16 and 17), having to live temporarily at her mother’s (63).

The living conditions have become unbearable and Arlette has to find an apartment to fill with the only furniture she has (beds, cupboards, table, chairs, appliances, etc.).

Learners are asked to perform 2 tasks:

1) Choose the most appropriate apartment from 2 apartment plans and furnish it in the best way, taking into consideration the family situation (drawing the items on the plan): the mother and her 2 adolescent sons.



The learners worked in 2 mixed groups in separate rooms, then reported their results to each other for comparison and discussion.



2) Convince the proprietor (65) to reduce the cost of the rent in accordance with Arlette's low income.

Each sub-group chose persons to enact the proprietor and Arlette. Before performing their role plays each sub-group had time to prepare arguments for their "actors".

Recorded impressions from both subgroups:

Task 1)

Above 50: cooperating with younger persons in order to solve a problem was challenging and stimulating at the same time. They found that they were "forced" into considering creative ideas (i.e. placing a bed in the hall). They realised how relative their options were. They expressed their satisfaction at having participated with younger persons in a fun activity. Agreeing on the choice of the best apartment was not easy but gratifying.

Below 50: They discovered that the older persons were concerned about the family relationships and priorities as factors determining the sharing of space and territory in the home. They were satisfied of being able to contribute to the choices made and of having come up with original solutions. They were not so concerned about intimacy issues.



Task 2)

Above 50: knowledge and experience seemed to be an asset in this situation. Being able to refer to past similar circumstances about housing legislation and having a more objective evaluation of prices made them feel quite at ease in both roles.

Under 50: the generation gap added to the different statuses (owner versus tenant) made them feel uneasy in a negotiation relation. Both roles were difficult to hold. They realised that unprepared decisions related to renting a place to live could lead to unsuspected problems.

STAGE 5

Evaluating and giving conclusions about feeling relaxed and happy at home.

An open discussion including all participants was arranged on the basis of a simple satisfaction questionnaire reviewing the principal task activities. Both generation groups said they had enjoyed working together.

All agreed that there was a unique approach to being well in your home. Each person has personal needs to be fulfilled and living conditions should take them into account: not only in what kind of place we live in but also who we live with and how.

A difference between generations was noted concerning the change or transformation factor of life places, home, rooms, etc. Many insisted on the importance of making changes in your home to feel better (moving things around, changing colours, adding plants, flowers, etc.). However this is truer for the younger generation whereas the older generation sees its permanent surroundings as secure and reassuring. Souvenirs and old objects are stacked reflecting a life history some look back to with nostalgia. For the older generation this could lead to resignation: "what's the use?"





WORKSHOP III (Type 1 group)

Daily activities in the home: now and then

Participants were asked to speak about their occupations when they were at home, the time spent on them and to say how they felt about them. They described their personal involvement in sharing tasks with other members of the family.



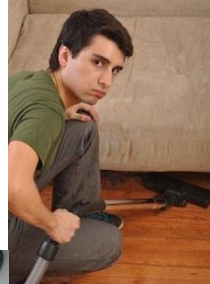
Cooking



Reading



Cleaning



Relaxing



Ironing



The Juniors learnt from the Seniors, mostly women at home, that they seldom had time to relax, being busy looking after the children, washing, cooking and cleaning without the help of modern household appliances.



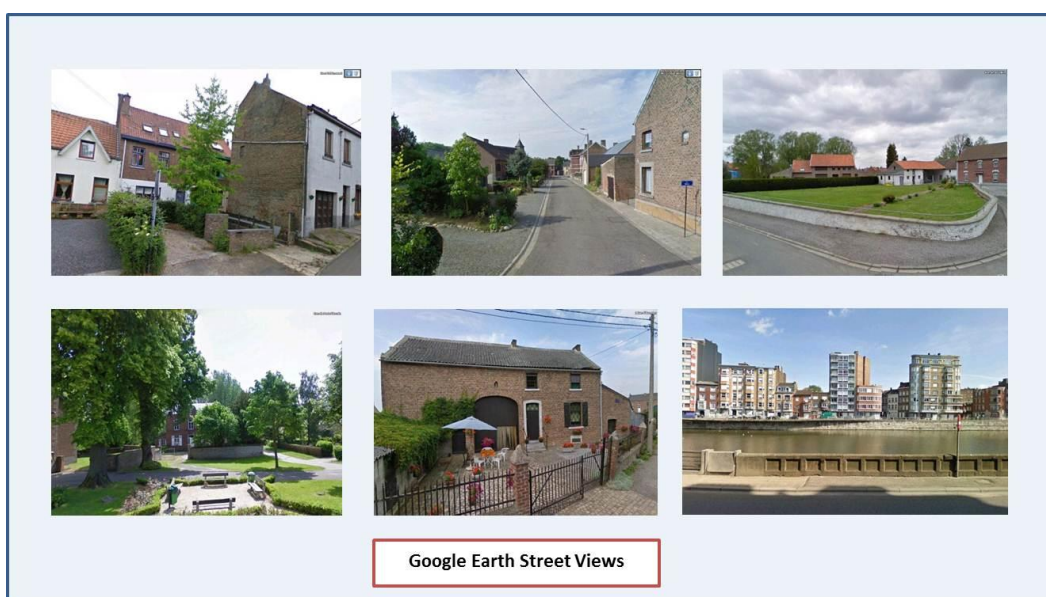


If you were lucky, you could have a short nap in the afternoon and perhaps read the newspapers, play cards and listen to music.

The Seniors learnt that today Juniors take part in housekeeping activities, like cleaning, helping to prepare meals, tidying their rooms, either by necessity, as some live on their own or with one parent, or from their own free will.

WORKSHOP IV (Type 1 group) Perceptions of preferred living places

All participants were asked to reveal which was or still is the place they preferred living in (village, quarter, street) and to give the reasons of their choice. Using Google Earth Street View it was possible visualise the places that were mentioned.



Both Seniors and Juniors were then asked to complete a short questionnaire:



- 1/ What was / is the room in which you like(d) being most?
- 2/ What was /is your favourite piece of furniture?
- 3/ What was /is the object you cherish most?

During restitution each person explained the reasons of their choices and included their answers in a more personal background.

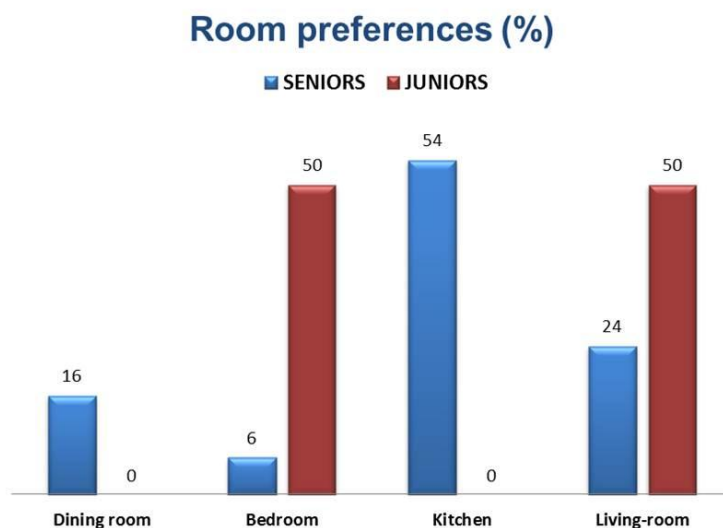


Each generational group learnt that age and lifestyle context were factors determining preferences for living places and furniture. Whereas objects were connected to personal circumstances.

RESULTS FOR ROOMS:

The ideal type (M.Weber) for Seniors would be the “eating place” (kitchen and dining room).

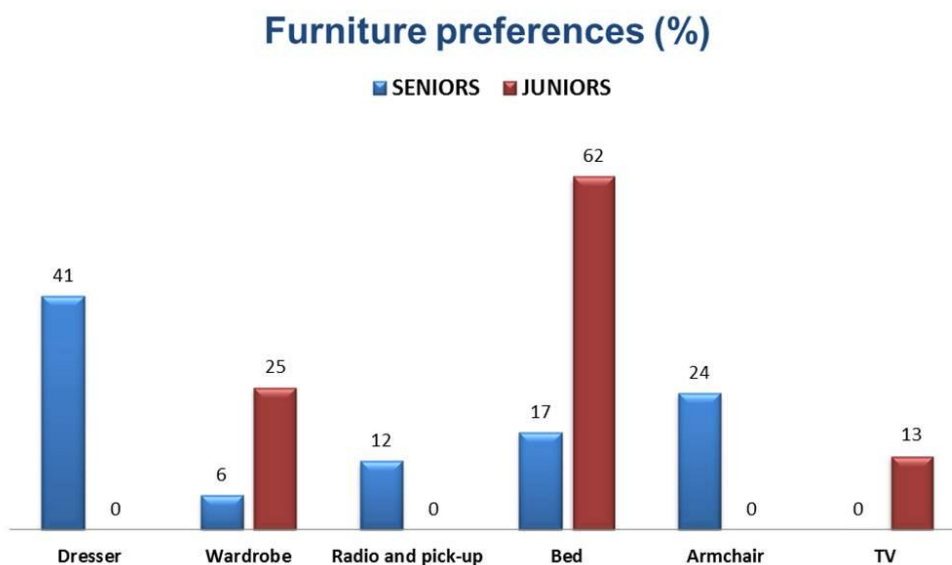
The ideal type for Juniors would be the bedroom and the living room.



RESULTS FOR FURNITURE:

The ideal type for Seniors would be the kitchen or dining room dresser.

The ideal type for Juniors would be the bed.





RESULTS FOR SIGNIFICANT OBJECTS:

Seniors appreciate objects that have a sentimental value:

A lamp, a record player (pick-up), ornaments (rabbits, photo frame, dolls), Christian cross, silverware, wristwatch, soup bowl, etc.

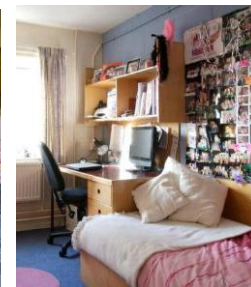
They are usually gifts received or souvenirs.

Juniors appreciate “functional” objects; their value is linked to what they can do with them:

Computer, TV set, Gameboy, mobile phone, mp3 player, etc.

They were usually linked to leisure time and activities.

For both age groups lifestyles preferences are directly related to their social and cultural chronological contexts but also to their individual life stories.



SENIORS



JUNIORS

WORKSHOP V (Type 1 group)

Generational household appliances

Each generational subgroup was asked to say what they knew about past and contemporary domestic devices and equipment.

The knowledge included instructions on how to use the apparatus and an evaluation of its usefulness. The following items were proposed separately for examination:



During the comparison and discussion period each person shared his or her experience and know-how about the objects.

RESULTS FOR JUNIORS:

They were familiar with most of the vintage objects but not directly, having seen them at their grandparents' or in films and books. They didn't have a precise idea of what they were for or how to use them. Some items were unknown altogether such as the copper hot water pan and the tub often mistaken for a garden pot or basin.

They were interested to learn how to use a coffee grinder, a gramophone and a mechanical sewing machine. They had no idea how sometimes complicated it was to use these machines or how much time it took to obtain what was desired: washing, ironing or even telephoning when people didn't have a phone at home. None of them had ever seen their mother or another person using an electric sewing machine at home.



RESULTS FOR SENIORS

Only two items were not recognised: a portable wireless speaker and the hot water bottle because of its unusual shape.

All of them agreed that, although they were sentimentally attached to the older household products, the contemporary household appliances were more useful and effective but sometimes difficult to manipulate due to lack of practical skills or simply ignorance of technological procedures. All of them had “seen” a mobile phone but none of them knew how to use one.

Some insisted on the ill effects on personalities of too much facility, considering that it makes people lazy and unable to cope with frustration. The automatic garden water sprinkler may help you avoid carrying watering cans but will make you lack necessary physical exercise.

WORKSHOP VI (Type 3 group) Past and present lifestyles in the home

The students were gathered in a school classroom for filmed interviews. They had time to prepare their answers to a certain number of questions about the way they perceived differences between generations regarding their domestic lifestyles and occupations at home. Their interviews were recorded on film for later presentation to Type 1 groups.



OUTCOMES:

The students pointed out the differences they perceived between themselves and their parents. They seem to have few points of comparison with the generation of their grandparents. They mostly insisted on what they perceived as disappearing values: respect, sharing, responsibility and support. They hadn't much to say about domestic duties, only that they seldom took part in them.

Reactions from seniors were usually sympathetic and justified by the existence of many new ways of living compared to their own generation.



(4) Results obtained from the various workshops and activities in terms of learning / teaching pedagogy and IG experiments.

(a) Discoveries about living and habitation lifestyles

- For **type 1** groups (Juniors / Seniors)

The fundamental factor determining differences in living styles is physical mobility or the lack of it which is directly related to your individual freedom and the possibilities of making changes. Usually still living with their parents the younger generation remains partly dependent in its lifestyle choices. Seniors living in residences have lost the faculty of doing as they please and look back nostalgically on the days they had their own home, whereas juniors look forward to the days they will have their own.

The differences in habitation lifestyles for these two categories are evident and each is characterised by the tastes of their epoch context, past or present. However, these two age groups have more in common than they think, each trying to find refuge in a particular place: the bedroom territory for young people and the mind with all its place memories for the old people.

- For **type 2** groups (Below 50 / Above 50)

Both generations in these groups share a common difficulty: finding the right place to live in comfortably and in harmony with your surroundings. Therefore the determining factor is not so much age but features related to income, culture and personality.

The Below 50 are seeking and trying new forms of collective living like taking part in activities in the same place, avoiding loneliness as a consequence.

They look for habitation styles that will help them overcome sorrow and sad feelings. They will prefer lively colours, some connexion with nature and people at the same time.

The Above 50 feel they have reached a point where any change in habitation style is problematic. They tend to remain in an immutable and unsatisfactory environment, creating a vicious circle. Their style is rather traditional and old fashioned, basically functional, underestimating the impact of atmosphere on emotions and attitude.

- For **type 3** groups (Education Agent Students)

Surprisingly the vast majority of students insisted on the lack of family relationships in homes today. Their perceptions of past domestic lifestyles reflected their own isolation and an aspiration for more contacts between family members. They imagined their parents' generation sharing more household activities together with children helping and taking part in home tasks. They expressed regret at being secluded and spending too much time alone in front of Internet chat forums. Essentially, their perceptions concentrated on the quality of relationships within the home rather than on material advantages.



(b) IG transmission during workshops and activities

- For **type 1** groups (Juniors / Seniors)

As for lifestyle variable 1 (eating habits) the exchange and sharing of knowledge in pairs or in small groups was established easily. All groups, including assisting staff and teacher-trainers, learnt a lot about each other's habitation styles, each of them being receptive and respectful of expressed individual tastes and inclinations.

The Seniors were able to "teach" Juniors on a number of subjects related to living places, their evolution and the causes of changes over time. They also gave them an insight into living conditions in the past with domestic activities that have now disappeared.

The Juniors were somewhat surprised at how little Seniors knew about some fast changes in contemporary living conditions. They tried to inform them the best they could about these transformations, particularly in the field of new facilities at home (heating and lighting, communication, maintenance and cleaning, etc.). Here the generation divide was apparent but not insurmountable.

- For **type 2** groups (Below 50 / Above 50)

Transmission was usually in one direction: from Below 50 to Above 50. It was most efficient during the creative exercises in mixed groups during which the Below 50 were able to stimulate and propose positive alternatives in living conditions, breaking the resistance of the Above 50.

The Above 50 were nevertheless able to share some of their experience in the practical fields of "how to" make, prepare, repair, find, etc. in the home. They also showed more confidence in the dispute role play situation giving the Below 50 some tips on how to react in real life conflicts between lessee and lessor involving alterations in your home.

- For **type 3** groups (Education Agent Students)

Due to the type of workshop transmission from one generation to another was limited to an exchange of perceptions that were confirmed by each generation. All agreed that living conditions determined lifestyles, attitudes, behaviour and relationships at home that could only be accepted as a given fact.



(5) Assessment of the degree of adaptability of the activities to different institutional and organisational contexts.

WORKSHOP I Ornamental and aesthetic tastes in the home.

The pictures must be selected so they can be easily identified by learners. The objects should be chosen carefully in order not to represent a too high degree of “mystery”.

WORKSHOP II Interiors: how do you feel at home?

The training course should be prepared with the students themselves making sure that their specific needs are taken into account and that they express their own objectives.

The 5 stages can easily be reproduced providing the stimuli are identifiable and meaningful for the learners.

The role play situation must be adapted to the local context, lifestyle habits and norms.

WORKSHOP III Daily activities in the home, now and then.

No difficulty for adjusting.

WORKSHOP IV Perceptions of preferred living places

No difficulty for adjusting.

WORKSHOP V Generational household appliances

Appliances should not necessarily be identifiable by all learners but should be culturally relevant.

WORKSHOP VI Past and present lifestyle in the home

Questions have to be carefully targeted taking the learners’ background into account.