

## Gifted seniors not everyone is average



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&  
SENG gifted elders initiative



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## Who are these gifted seniors?

- Achievements?
  - Academic
  - Creative
  - Politics
  - .....
- Looks, appearance?
- Intuition? We just see it, feel it, know it...?

- Annemarie Roeper



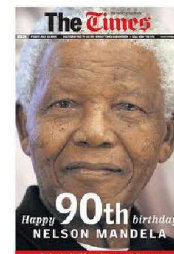
- Carmen dell'Orefice, model since her 15th, now 84



- Fauja Singh, marathon runner of 100



- Nelson Mandela



- Marian Diamond, neuro-researcher, now 89



- Shibata, wrote first book of poems when 99



and many other seniors ...

- not showing their talents or giftedness
- hiding their needs
- becoming lonely and sad
- waiting for the end
- or: happy and lively?



### Why paying attention to this group?

- Negative reasons
  - Loneliness
  - Mental problems
  - Critical and difficult people
  - Conflicts with care givers
  - Dementia and giftedness?
- Positive reasons
  - Understanding themselves
  - Less lonely
  - More suitable activities
  - Adding talents to society



### Personal motivation

- Gifted adults: publications, presentations
- Gifted Adults Foundation (IHBV) since 2010
- Now 67
- My character
- Many stories
- No research



### Small study 2013 6 interviews

#### Questions

- Brief description of your life and work?
- What means giftedness for you?
- Discovering your giftedness?
- What are your activities now?
- Advices for others like you?

### Interview group

- Female: 4
- Male: 2
- Ages: 71 – 91
- 1 married, 2 widows, 2 divorced, 1 single
- Living: 5 independent, 1 in residential home
- Health: 5 fairly good and mobile

### Life and work

- 3 from parents with lower education
- 2 had military father
- 1 had academic parents
- 2 women and 1 man only secondary school
- 2 women higher educated
- 1 man university later in life
- Many searched long for good and fitting work, not always found it

### Discovering of giftedness

- As a child: 1
- During military service: 1
- Because of (grand)children: 2
- Late in life: 1
- Because of the interview: 1

### Meaning of giftedness

- Understanding own life (retrospective)
- Looking for fitting activities
- Good contact with (grand)children
- Happy to know about giftedness

Also:

- Loneliness
- Searching

### Example innovative project

Axioncontinu 'De Ingelanden':  
living, care and wellbeing in Utrecht

- Residents live together in small groups
- Focus on gifted, educated and other residents
- Asking input what *they* want to do and learn
- Let seniors participate in organizing activities

 Axioncontinu

### Needs of residents

- Future-oriented
- Meeting like-minded residents
- Conversing at their own level
- Challenging activities
- In-depth topics

 Axioncontinu

### Steps to a better life for gifted seniors

1. Targeted questions during intake
2. Education of staff
3. Adapt activities to their wishes and needs
4. New activities focused on their needs

Example:

Cultural Club, for and by residents

Future: expand to other locations



### Social and emotional needs of gifted seniors? (Bouwman & Geertsma, 2015)

- Interviews:
  - Participation in society
  - Self-development, strong need to acquire knowledge
  - Social networking
- Questionnaire 100 members Mensa NL 60 +
  - 86% want to develop
  - Majority moderate lonely

### Knowledge of professionals working with elderly (Aryee, 2015)

- 5 interviews with professionals
- Results diverse
- Some interest
- Knowledge not great
- Recognize it sometimes in clients
- No need for specific knowledge or skills
- Want practical advice (referral)

### SENG Gifted elders initiative

- Research data, meta analysis
- Research based needs
- New research
- Disseminate findings
- Grow awareness
- Collaboration!



• *Let us know your interest! See handout*

Your suggestions  
for a better life  
for gifted seniors?



Best wishes for a happy gifted seniorship!



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