Understanding Longevity: How longer lives are reshaping work, education and society?

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Advances in areas such as medicine, nutrition, sanitation, and education have increased life expectancy worldwide which means that people are living longer today than in previous generations. Longevity is a concept describing the shift created by longer lives which requires societies to rethink and redesign health, work, financial, and social systems to support sustainable and inclusive prosperity across generations.(World Economic Forum, 2025)

Longevity is influenced and maintained by lifestyle, social connections and healthcare. While it creates new opportunities, it also presents important social and economic challenges that societies must address (World Economic Forum, 2024).

The impact of longevity

Longer lives create greater opportunities for lifelong learning and challenge traditional educational systems to support continuous skill development (World Economic Forum, 2024). Due to the demographic shift, many countries encourage people to remain economically active beyond traditional retirement age, supporting longer and more productive working lives and careers.

Countries such as Japan and Switzerland are among the leaders in global life expectancy. According to OECD (2025), these countries demonstrate an example of how healthy ageing can be supported through effective societal systems and cultural practices. At the moment, Finland is adapting its social and healthcare systems to the needs of an ageing population; at the end of 2025, 24% of Finland’s population was aged 65 or over (Statistics Finland, 2026).

In terms of supply and demand, the growth of the “longevity economy” creates new business opportunities by increasing demand for products and services that support longer, healthier, and financially resilient lives (World Economic Forum, 2024).

SEAMK students innovating for longevity

In October 2026, a group of second year business students will participate in a blended intensive programme titled ’’Business Innovation in a Longevity Society’’. The programme will be set up by Windesheim university of applied sciences located in Zwolle, the Netherlands.

This BIP will offer the students the opportunity to examine the impact of longer lives from human, societal, and entrepreneurial perspectives. While the students are working in interdisciplinary teams, they will investigate the implications of longevity in areas such as housing, healthcare, technology, work, and wellbeing.

The main objectives of the BIP are to develop a deeper understanding of longevity as a societal challenge, to strengthen the intercultural collaboration skills of the participants and to gain experience in applying creative and entrepreneurial approaches to complex future-oriented issues.

From a methodological point of view, the BIP combines interdisciplinary collaboration, creative research methods, and design thinking. Teamwork, reflection, and experimentation will enhance analytical and creative problem-solving skills while exploring the opportunities and challenges of a longevity society.

Conclusion

Longevity is a concept influenced by lifestyle, healthcare, social relationships, and public policies. The goal is not only to live longer but also to maintain a high quality of life throughout old age. Regardless of the age of the reader, the topic is most current and relevant as growing older is touching upon all of us, both on individual and societal levels.

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