

The Guiding Principles of the U3A Movement

There are three main principles

- The Third Age Principle
- The Self-help Learning Principle
- The Mutual Aid Principle

The Third Age Principle

- a) Membership of a U3A is open to all in their third age, which is defined not by a particular age but by a period in life in which full time employment has ceased and parenting duties completed i.e. children have reached independence.
- b) Members should promote the values of lifelong learning and the positive attributes of belonging to a U3A.
- c) Members should do all they can to ensure that people wanting to join a U3A can do so.

The Self-help Learning Principle

- a) Members self-mobilise into learning circles covering as wide a range of interests as they desire. It is by the members, for the members.
- b) No qualifications are sought or offered. It is learning for its own sake, as an end in itself, with sheer enjoyment being the prime motive, not qualifications, awards or personal advancement.
- c) There is no distinction between the learners and the teachers, they are all U3A members.

The Mutual Aid Principle

- a) Each U3A is a mutual aid organisation, independently managed but in a confederate relationship with the Third Age Trust, which requires adherence to the guiding principles of the U3A Movement.
- b) No payments are made to members for services rendered to the university.
- c) Each university should be self-funded with membership fees kept as low as possible.
- d) Outside financial assistance should not be contemplated if it imperils the integrity of the mutual aid principle.