

LAB 50♀

LEARNING ACROSS BORDERS

CATALOGUE OF IDEAS

Senior Volunteering Abroad
in Education and Culture



wildundweise



Lifelong Learning Programme
Grundtvig

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.

This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Laboratory of Senior Volunteering

The initial idea of the partnership was to bring together organizations and institutions working with seniors in education and culture. They are all interested in improving and enriching activity by developing and including senior volunteering abroad in education and culture in their work. Furthermore, our aim was to make senior volunteering abroad a better-known option and a tool to overcome marginalization of older people, especially the marginalization of older women.

The project was realized by three organizations: Verein wildundweise, Basel (Switzerland), Fraueninitiative Berlin-Warschau, Berlin (Germany) and Women's Foundation eFKa, Cracow (Poland). Each of the organizations implements educational projects concerning seniors and / or encounters and exchange between different generations. None of our three organizations works mainly on the field of senior volunteering, but for each of our organizations collaboration with senior volunteers is an important issue.

We are interested in enriching our intercultural work and work with seniors by exchanging ideas and testing them in our pilot projects.

Within the partnership each organization developed a pilot project concerning an aspect of senior volunteering according to its own needs, experiences and profile. Pilot projects dealt with what is required to make senior volunteering abroad a fruitful, useful and satisfying learning experience for each side, senior volunteers and sending and hosting organizations.

By sharing the ideas resulting from “Laboratory 50+” we aim to encourage seniors to be mobile, active and open toward gaining new competences by volunteering abroad. Also, we want to encourage organizations and institutions to take advantage of the openness, enthusiasm and competences of senior volunteers.



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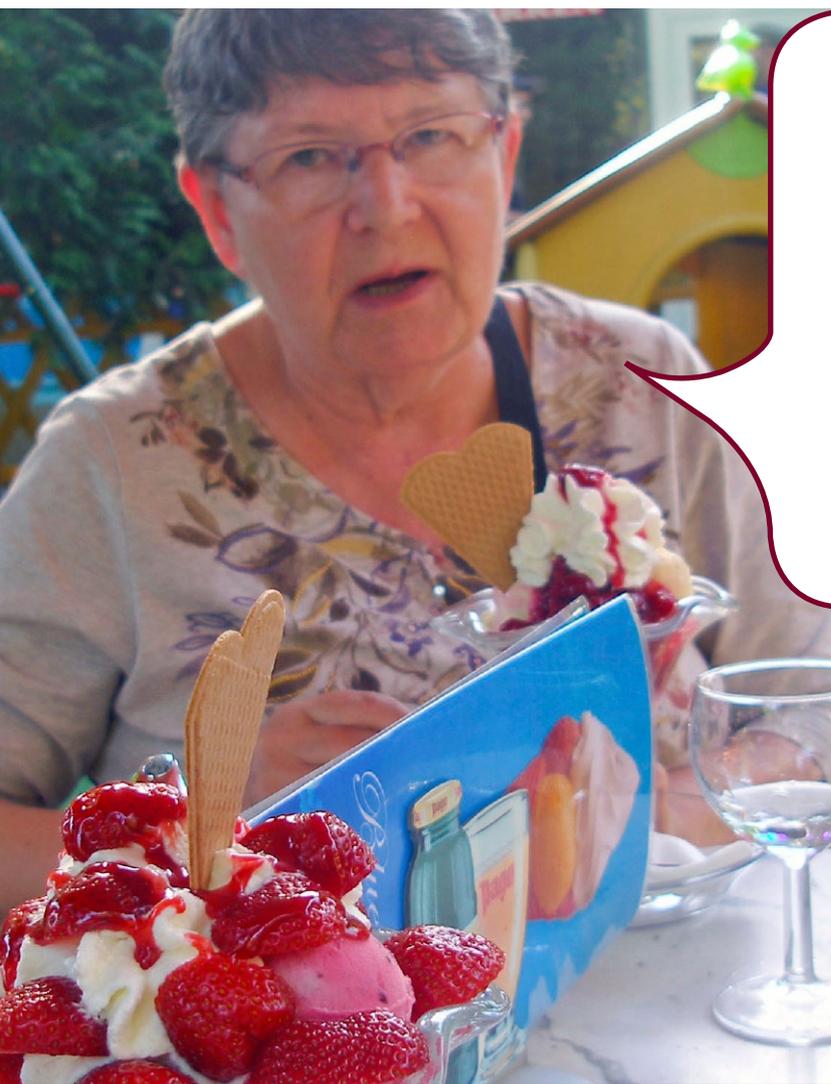


LAB
CATALOGUE OF IDEAS **50**
♀

1. WHY SENIOR VOLUNTEERS?



In educational projects of the Women's Foundation eFKa SVs are biographical experts. Their life experience helps younger generations to understand better their own world. For everybody their intergenerational connections help in overcoming isolation, marginalization and closeness in the generational ghettos.



Let me tell you, that elder people are interested in, that happens in our surrounding. Certainly, we are interested in meeting new people and in learning exchange with them. You will wonder, how many things we can tell you about, when you will be enough open to hear.

1. WHY SENIOR VOLUNTEERS?



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In general, the population in Europe is growing older. Many of the elderly stay healthy and active after their retirement.

Senior citizens are no longer involved in a daily 9-to-5 job that leaves no time to get involved in volunteering. However, many seniors are still very fit and have much to give. And what's more, they enjoy sharing their experience and knowledge without the pressure of having to prove themselves in the rat race of their working lives.

1. WHY SENIOR VOLUNTEERS?



**Fraueninitiative
Berlin – Warschau e.V.**

The people in Europe are living longer. However, that will be charged with many stereotypes that they, especially women, have often internalized. Therefore, they are displaced from many areas. Our aim is to break down these stereotypes and to overcome the resistance to new, as well as to prove that one can realize dreams at any age.

The language often reflects the negative attitude towards women 50+, but sometimes it also offers new views. In Polish and in Romanian languages when talking about age, it is said: “Mam 50 lat”, which literally means not “I am 50 years old”, but “I have 50 years”. Thus the experience, the resources increase with higher age.



Ich bin 30 Jahre alt



Mam 50 lat

2. HOW DID WE MEET THE POTENTIAL SVS ? IN WHICH WAY DID THEY FIND US?



Our collaborators, volunteers and listeners are mostly students and mostly women. They are usually young and well educated. Those elder participants of our activities paid our attention on needs for contact and on educational and biographical potential of older people. We noticed also a kind of closeness of generations in their “age ghettos”: teenagers have mostly contacts with another teenagers, students prefer to meet and exchange with students and older people remain in their age group. Crossing the divisions between age groups and bringing together people of different generations resolves enorm energy. We noticed it in our biographical and oral history projects, in which women of different generations and also of different nations share their biographical knowledge and experience. Usually, we formulate extra invitation to elder participants of our educational projects.

2. HOW DID WE MEET THE POTENTIAL SVS? IN WHICH WAY DID THEY FIND US?



Tagung Lebenslanges Lernen 50+ in Basel | wildundweise

HOME ÜBER UNS PROJEKTE OPEN SPACE NEUHEITEN KONTAKT

Tagung Lebenslanges Lernen 50+ in Basel

23. April 2012 von wildundweise

LEARNING ACROSS BORDERS
Senior Volunteering Abroad in Education and Culture
Organisation: wildundweise

Vom 25. – 27. April 2012 organisierte wildundweise in Basel die Tagung **LEARNING ACROSS BORDERS – Senior Volunteering Abroad in Education and Culture**

Institutionen aus der Schweiz sowie Gäste und EU Partner aus Deutschland und Polen aus dem Bereich Freiwilligenarbeit erarbeiteten Ideen und Projekte zum Thema: Lernen über die Grenzen – Lebenslanges Lernen 50+ – Senioren Freiwilligenarbeit in Bildung und Kultur.

Teilnehmer aus folgenden Institutionen und Ländern nahmen teil:

- Fundacja Kobiece eFKA, Krakau (Polen)
- Fraueninitiative Berlin-Warschau, Berlin (Deutschland)
- Verein wildundweise, Basel (Schweiz)
- Benevol Baselland (Schweiz)
- intergeneration.ch – Schweizerische Gemeinnützige Gesellschaft (Schweiz)
- Generationsakademie, Binningen (Schweiz)
- Studierende der Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz – Institut Hyperwerk

NEUHEITEN

- „Lernen über die Grenzen“ – Freiwilligenarbeit in Bildung und Kultur
- Tagung Lebenslanges Lernen 50+ in Basel
- Bericht im Magazin der Kantonsbibliothek Baselland
- Zukunftswerkstatt
- Bereifz Promenade – rund um solidarisch
- Erkunder, wild und artig sein. Machen Sie mit!
- Europäisches Jahr für aktives Altern und Solidarität zwischen den Generationen 2012
- Verienung Wintergäste 2012
- Verienung Lesetour 2012
- Autoren berührender Bücher erzählen
- kleines Kind – Grosser Mundel
- Pressebericht – Zeitschrift Frauenland
- Ufelong Learning
- Jump Days The Wall – Biographisch Workshop for Women
- Neue Kindertrachten fürs Baseltief?

TRANSLATOR

DE FR IT EN

PARTNER

- Swisslos Fonds Basel-Landschaft
- Europäische Union – Grundzug
- Kantonsbibliothek BL
- Museum BL
- Gesundheitsförderung BL
- FHNW-Hyperwerk
- Traverse
- IK-Generation.ch
- BundBL.ch
- benevol
- Stiftung Silvia
- Mammutz
- Zoo Basel

SOCIAL MEDIA

- wildundweise bei facebook
- Graffiti sticken

ZUM MITMACHEN

- Open Space
- Kultur
- Bücher
- Kurse
- Löhlena

PRESSE

- Was die Medien berichten

OMA BLOGS

- Grossmamas Schatzkiste
- Gone to the dogs
- Wir Sterne kinder-Grosseltern

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Concerning our projects, our website and publications, in contact with our network partners in Switzerland and abroad.

2. HOW DID WE MEET THE POTENTIAL SVS ? IN WHICH WAY DID THEY FIND US?



Most of our members are 50+, so it was not difficult to find potential volunteers. It was either our members or acquaintances. Some of them were interested from the beginning to join in, some had to be convinced.

The partners abroad that we should work together we found in the Country Women's Association in the village Sosny, Poland, to which we have a special relationship due to the unique history of the place.

3. WHAT IS THE REASON TO WORK ACROSS THE BORDERS?



We are interested in overcoming stereotypes and in arranging situations, mostly educational situations, which will be supportive for reflection on customs of ones own culture by encounters with the other cultures. The gender stereotypes are different in different societies and cultures. Encounters with the other gender customs and with gender regulations in the other culture can bring more understanding and openness toward ones own gender rules and stereotypes

3. WHAT IS THE REASON TO WORK ACROSS THE BORDERS?



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We want to show the opportunities that exist when elderly people actively engage in a cross-border volunteer project. International meetings are interesting, but quite rare.

We wanted to learn about our host's culture and communicate about our own in a nonverbal way. In order to overcome the language barrier, we decided to communicate through "music, singing and drawing/art".

3. WHAT IS THE REASON TO WORK ACROSS THE BORDERS?



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Berlin – Warschau e.V.***

Even our statute says that the goal of our association is to work internationally: over the German-Polish border. It's about lasting and sustainable relationships, mutual understanding and learning from the people of the neighboring country, countering the prejudices and stereotypes. It is also about experience and information exchange between Polish and German women's organizations, providing contacts, creating networks and volunteering abroad. In this respect it fits well to the Grundtvig program of learning partnerships.

After Poland's accession to the EU the cross-border activities should be natural. Nevertheless, the border in some perceptions is still very present, it exists in the minds. We are working against.

4. WHAT IS THE MOTIVATION OF THE SVS TO WORK ABROAD? WHAT DO THEY LEARN?



Seniors, participating in the international activities, have the unique opportunity to learn about the other country and culture by direct contact with people, culture and society. Their biographical knowledge and their openness for biographical exchange with the foreigners is such kind of intercultural work, which can bring more tolerance and understanding between nations, cultures and genders.



*Sixty years long
I was waiting for
the opportunity to tell
you about it.*

An elder Ukrainian woman was looking for contact with interviewers from the eFKa's group, who collected interviews with by force replaced women.

4. WHAT IS THE MOTIVATION OF THE SVS TO WORK ABROAD? WHAT DO THEY LEARN?



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They become acquainted with other cultures and people. For the volunteers, this commitment is a possibility for lifelong learning. SVs should be willing to learn the basics of the particular national language.

The motivation is individual. One of our SVs described it this way: *I think I am really privileged to live in Switzerland. Therefore, it makes sense to me to meet and support people in less privileged countries. Also, it gives me the opportunity to learn a lot about other cultures and customs, and I also learn a lot about myself. I wanted to see and experience, what kind of exchange is possible without knowing the language ... what works and what does not ...*

4. WHAT IS THE MOTIVATION OF THE SVS TO WORK ABROAD? WHAT DO THEY LEARN?



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Urszula Weiss from Fraueninitiative Berlin-Warschau went to Sosny for several weekends – in all 8 times – to give the lessons in German for women 50+ from the Country Women’s Association.

It was initially difficult to convince the women that they can learn a foreign language at her age. They talked about this and came to the conclusion that everyone learns for a lifetime. So they could be gradually convinced and find finally a pleasure in language learning.

Urszula Weiss:

I was personally motivated with the energy, the will of the women who wanted to learn something new, with their kind to organize and to master their own life which is not easy, with their open nature and warmth. I was pleased that they have fun and enjoy to look

beyond their own borders, have more confidence in their own skills. The first successes have motivated them to continue.

By learning the basics of a new language the participants discovered new possibilities. They were glad to take part for the first time in an international project. Meanwhile two of the women found seasonal job in Germany.



5. WHAT KIND OF EDUCATIONAL INSTRUMENTS DO SVS WORK WITH?



SVs can be “biographical experts” of the intercultural projects and can learn in biographical way from the others. In eFka’s pilot projects the exchange of biographical knowledge was connected with verbal communication. It needed usually to be interpreted or translated and the participation of a “cultural” translator, involved in the topic, was necessary. The verbal communication was usually supported by extra-verbal communication, it means by gesture and mimic.

5. WHAT KIND OF EDUCATIONAL INSTRUMENTS DO SVS WORK WITH?



Presentation of the filmed interviews with Ukrainian women during a Polish-German festival in Sosny was a starting point for exchange between Polish and German Seniors, who had similar experience of forced replacement. Both Polish and German older women, participating in the international and intergenerational film projection in Sosny, allowed the younger generation to understand better the newest history and its late consequences. The SVs as biographical experts were an important, living source of the subjective, historical knowledge and the younger participants had a unique opportunity to contact the witnesses of the history.

5. WHAT KIND OF EDUCATIONAL INSTRUMENTS DO SVS WORK WITH?

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During their lives, SVs have built up a treasure trove of skills and experience.

In abroad volunteer projects, language is often a big barrier. We wanted to learn about our host's culture and provide information about our own in a nonverbal way. To overcome the language barrier, we decided to communicate through "music, singing and drawing/art".

Through collective singing and the joint designing and drawing, cultural barriers could be crossed. It was exiting to hear that similar songs are sung in Poland, for example, an equivalent to the Swiss folksong "Lueged vo Bärg und Tal" (look from mountains and valleys).

5. WHAT KIND OF EDUCATIONAL INSTRUMENTS DO SVS WORK WITH?



Luegit vo Bärq und Tal

Luegit vo Bärq und vo Tal
Fliet scho de Sunnestrahl
Luegit uf Fälder und Matte
Wachse die dunkle Schatte
D'Sunn uf de Bärge no stobt
Oh, wie sind d'Gletscher so rot
Oh, wie sind d'Gletscher so rot



Music represents an important cultural aspect in both countries. People all over the world love to sing. We wanted to know what kind of songs Polish people like to sing. We brought Swiss songs to Poland and took Polish songs back to Switzerland. Choirmaster Petra Vogel rehearsed folksongs with Sosny's villagers and their visitors from Germany and Switzerland. The Polish folksongs were translated into High German and Swiss German; the Swiss folksongs were translated into Polish and High German. Together, we sang songs from the three countries. The Swiss folksong "Lueget vo Bärq und Tal" (look from mountains and valleys) enjoyed a particular resonance. It is a Swiss folksong from the 19th Century.



5. WHAT KIND OF EDUCATIONAL INSTRUMENTS DO SVS WORK WITH?



In the small village of Sosny in Poland one of our Volunteers realized a wonderful project with children of the village and from Berlin and two school classes in Switzerland.

The children in Poland drew their surroundings on postcards, under the guidance of the artist Mo Richner. The little artworks were taken back to Switzerland. Children from two school classes in Switzerland drew their “responses” on the reverse of the cards. The children in Switzerland thought about the children in distant Poland. Without using words, they communicated through their drawing with the children in Poland and told them something about their lives in Switzerland.

5. WHAT KIND OF EDUCATIONAL INSTRUMENTS DO SVS WORK WITH?



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Urszula Weiss:

It was a loose round every time, we chatted and enjoyed the cooking and baking skills of village women. Authentic contents were inserted: the work of women, the family, everyday life, for example cooking. There were also funny situations: when one of the women not could remember the word “Petersilie” (parsley), she got from the other women the nickname “Frau Petersilie”; the another one who had a similar problem with the word „Knoblauch“ (garlic) – the nickname „Frau Knoblauch“ (the artist from the partner organization in Basel has made a drawing about it).

The lessons were pretty loose. Not only language came to the fore but also the culture of the neighboring country: facts from the life in Germany (but also in Austria and Switzerland). I also talked about cultural differences.

In the initial lessons they were listening, speaking and repeating; the areas of reading and writing were not included. But the urge to write was so strong that we started earlier than planned to write. The exercise formats I tried to make diverse and varied. There were paintings, drawings , texts, articles, games, lot of conversations, repetitions and communication within the learning group, exchange of the learned among women - mutual questioning and answers.

5. WHAT KIND OF EDUCATIONAL INSTRUMENTS DO SVS WORK WITH?



As a teacher for the German language I could use my skills and experience to differentiate instruction according to the group. My earlier work with learners of all ages, but especially with adults, had the advantage for this project. The women not only learned the differences between the languages, but also the culture and mentality of the other countries. They learned new, interesting, amazing things. The learning generated more knowledge and more understanding of each others.

6. WHAT IS THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT DO SVS WORK IN?



Our aim is to overcome marginalization of older people, especially women. The voluntary work abroad let them to develop their potential, to have a unique experience and to feel really their worth as supporter of the community or organization.



6. WHAT IS THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT DO SVS WORK IN?



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We think it is necessary that volunteers live in the same social and cultural environment as their host organization. The volunteers need to be informed about the living situation in the host country and about the type of accommodation in advance.

6. WHAT IS THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT DO SVS WORK IN?



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Our volunteer worked in the Polish border region, in the village Sosny. This place is a special point of the activity of our association. It is a manor that until 1945 was called Charlottenhof and owned by the family von Klitzing. Our member Annema von Klitzing comes from there, who had to leave Charlottenhof in 1945 at the age of 12 years. In 1999 the manor was bought by a Polish woman from Wrocław. The former and the present owner of Sosny have met and befriended. Currently both are the member of our association. In the village collaborate the volunteers from Germany and Poland, the guests from other countries also come to organize workshops, concerts and events for children. It is becoming a meeting place for different nations, cultures and social groups.



7. WHAT DOES THE HOST ORGANISATION NEED TO KNOW?



We are not always aware of cultural differences and stereotypes. The host organization must be well prepared to make the barriers of such kind as low as possible. The feeling of foreignness can be reduced in many ways, also by making fun on that.

7. WHAT DOES THE HOST ORGANISATION NEED TO KNOW?



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The host organization has to be well informed about the visiting individuals and they must know what project the volunteers intend to implement. Agreements must be observed, both by the host organization and the senior volunteers.

It is important that during their stay the volunteers become a part of the host organization. They need to be coached in order to discover and solve emerging problems at an early stage. Therefore, the SVs need to be supported by a tutor (responsible for practical support and information) and a mentor (responsible for the organization of the volunteers' project).

A common language needs to be defined in advance. The host organization is the link between the locals and the senior volunteers. In our pilot Projects the locals were informed in advance and invited to participate. Consequently, many people could benefit from the project. The host organization must inform the sending organization and the SVs about the customs in the host country.

7. WHAT DOES THE HOST ORGANISATION NEED TO KNOW?



**Fraueninitiative
Berlin – Warschau e.V.**

Maria Gast-Ciechomska:

In this project our association - Fraueninitiative Berlin-Warschau – was both: the sending and the host organization. End of November 2012 three women from Sosny who participated in the German lessons came to Berlin to give a presentation about Sosny for the German people. The presentation consisted of pictures that were taken by the people of Sosny. For various reasons we were not kept informed about the progress of women in the learning of German, so we didn't know if they were able to perform this in German. We have agreed that it was too early. But we should decide otherwise.

8. WHAT CAN THE HOST ORGANISATION LEARN?



The host organization can gain new competences and create a new resource space. By organizing interactive meetings with the SVs the learners and the community can get access to language, country, culture and tradition, which is not easy accessible for everybody.

8. WHAT CAN THE HOST ORGANISATION LEARN?

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The host organization can benefit from the senior volunteers by learning new things from them. Knowledge is exchanged, and the hosts can learn about the senior volunteers' culture and country while obtaining new ideas for further projects and practicing international cooperation.

8. WHAT CAN THE HOST ORGANISATION LEARN?



**Fraueninitiative
Berlin – Warschau e.V.**

As a host organization we have learned from this experience to trust our volunteers more! And the communication between certain parts of the project must be better.

The visit of the women from Sosny in Berlin lasted only 3 days; in this respect was their abroad activity just a small attempt. As an association we are also not able to provide the foreign volunteers to work in Germany for 3 weeks. But we can try to find another way to make it possible.

9. WHAT SHOULD THE SENDING ORGANIZATION KNOW?



The good cooperation with the host organization is crucial. The sending organization must know the details of living and working place. The sending organization initiates the contact with the SVs and is responsible to deliver well proved information about the situation, which is waiting for the SVs abroad.

9. WHAT SHOULD THE SENDING ORGANIZATION KNOW?



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The sending organization must be informed of the project which the volunteers intend to realize. They need to understand the SVs motivations and keep an eye on the SVs preparatory work.

Agreements must be observed, both by the sending organization and the senior volunteers. It is difficult to find senior volunteers who are able to commit themselves long term.

When doing volunteer work abroad, the local language can represent an enormous barrier. The sending organization should recommend that their SVs learn the local language ... daily basics are sufficient.

9. WHAT SHOULD THE SENDING ORGANIZATION KNOW?



*Fraueninitiative
Berlin – Warschau e.V.*

We were in the fortunate position that we know the place and the conditions very well: housing, infrastructure etc. We have found, however, that depending on the project the linguistic situation must be known exactly: if interpreting is necessary and how to manage it.

It must be initially known that the accommodation facilities in Sosny are very basic. But for a short time and during the summer it may be even an additional attraction for city dwellers.

10. WHAT CAN THE SENDING ORGANIZATION LEARN?



The sending organization has a chance to include new practices and perspectives in its activity. In our pilot projects we developed our knowledge and our sensitivity towards situation, needs and expectations of older women. The recognition of their biographical experience across the borders and in despite of borders was clearly acting for empowerment of older women and for overcoming their social and cultural exclusion.

10. WHAT CAN THE SENDING ORGANIZATION LEARN?

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For the sending organization it is an important experience and extension of their international network. The volunteers need to be prepared for the language barrier by means of coaching. We recommend that volunteers learn the language in advance.

10. WHAT CAN THE SENDING ORGANIZATION LEARN?



As a sending organisation we have learned that seniors have a great potential and that many things they seem impossible are possible at least. In this respect we are planning more projects in Sosny: continuation of the German lessons, use of the old store as a showroom and library (German corner, Swiss corner). Especially since we have also experienced through the project what funding opportunities are available.

We have also learned how important it is to evaluate the experience (positive as well as negative). Until now in our activities in the project we solely spot-checked the models. However, the regular inserts are for 3 weeks: for our volunteers it would be better if foreign activities could be made more flexible (not only 3-week stays, but also shorter or in parts!). Because for many women 50+ is the 3-week version not feasible.



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Graphic design & typesetting:
Olison's Project / www.olisons.pl