



Mastering older age!

Inspiring role models of women 70+ from Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Italy, Lithuania and Czech Republic, interviewed by women 50+



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Preface

The attitudes of older citizens towards their own age and ageing process are highly influenced by images of ageing conveyed by the media, politics and economy. These images can be very stereotypical and often polarize between the image of “young, fit seniors” and the “elderly person in need of care”. This does not correspond to social reality.

Recent demographic data show that in the future, there will be many very old people, mainly women, in all European societies. There is a lack of role models for an active old age, seen as something positive in spite of crises and existing constraints. That is why women over 50 from seven educational institutions in six Eastern and Western European countries have asked what “successful” ageing is. In the context of the European Grundtvig Learning Partnership “European Women in Older Age” (EWA), they chose women over 70 years old as models and inspiration for their own successful ageing.

In this book, you will find a short project description, the questions and methods drafted jointly, and the results on national and international level. The partner groups describe themselves and their work. Further, each group presents two women of over 70 years who have impressed them by their lifestyle and attitude towards life in old age. The project description, interviews and group presentations are in English and the national language, all other texts in English.

On the project website, you will find all 87 interviews, the partner groups and their institutions (www.european-women.eu). Also, a poster series and a multimedia DVD give a vivid impression of the whole project.

As the lead coordinator, I would like to thank all participating women and coordinators for the time, energy and passion they spent on this project. Cooperation on national and international level worked exceedingly well. Special thanks goes to Gerti Zupanich for the coordination of the poster series and to Vitalija Norviliene for the DVD are available and give a vivid impression. I sincerely thank the group from Ulm, especially Pia Schmücker and Barbara Heinze, for their support in conceptualizing and editing this book – and above all Viktor Nordir for his meticulous and patient graphic realisation.

Carmen Stadelhofer, Academic Director, Head of the Centre for General Scientific Continuing Education (ZAWiW) of Ulm University

Where are the EWA-groups coming from?





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Grundtvig-Learning Partnership European Women in Older Age (EWA)

In today's society with its progress in medical care, it is no longer unusual that women in Europe live 80 years and longer. This means that the social and economic situation as well as the role perception of older women change. Furthermore, important changes emerge in the various European states through the opening of the former "Eastern Block". The EWA project examined the issue of how the biographies of older women were influenced. Under which social conditions did the women grow up? How was the gender role seen and which historical, political and social events have determined the women's lives? What does successful ageing mean in this context?

What do we actually know about women aged 70+ who look back on a particularly long life full of professional and private activities? What turning points and challenges like illness, loss of a partner or a child, or financial difficulties did they have to cope with? Which professional, social, charitable or artistic activities do they practice and how do they perceive their ageing? Seven women's groups from six European countries worked on this subject from autumn 2010 until summer 2012 within the Grundtvig Learning Partnership „European Women in older Age“ (EWA).

Personal talk opens the door to understanding older people. That is why the aim of this project was to develop and implement a standardised interview pattern that was comparable. Various interview techniques were developed and applied in a modified form in each partner country. The personal contacts and talks were very moving.

The interviewers were women aged 50+, who through the interview experience could reflect on their own life experiences. Both age groups of the women (70+ and 50+) still have to cope with the fact that the education possibilities remain different for men and women and that women often put their professional career aside to the benefit of family life.

The EWA project introduces the life achievements of selected women, who have succeeded in being happy in their old age and in mastering difficult situations. The variety of life stories gives courage to handle the high age phase consciously and with open eyes and to recognise its own value.

An important effect of the project for the interviewers was the opportunity to test and to apply various technical tools (e.g. audio, film and video recordings, PowerPoint presentations, website) and to gain new competences in the way of lifelong learning in a life phase in which the own professional and active family phase had already ended. For the documentation of the interviews not only methods of verbal interviews were needed, but also techniques of creative writing.

Four partner meetings (Sofia, Ceske Budejovice, Ferrara and Ulm) provided the opportunity to develop the questionnaire, to discuss the interview techniques and exchange practical experiences.

Through fostering exchanges between women from various European countries, the project also contributed to a better understanding of the respective specific social, political and historical situations. Further project aims were the initiation of a network within adult education in Europe and the development of friendships.

The results provide insight into the life of older women in Europe and their ageing. The project integrated applications of new media with tools such as Skype, translation machines and Internet forums. At the end of the project, the life stories of selected interesting and inspiring women from all over Europe were documented in English and in the respective national language by different media: the interviews on the project website, exemplary life stories on a DVD and in this book.

Barbara Heinze, EWA-Group Ulm, co-coordinator

Grundtvig – vzdělávací partnerství Evropské ženy ve vyšším věku

V dnešní společnosti již není neobvyklé, že se ženy dožívají věku přes 80 let. To znamená, že se mění jejich společenská i ekonomická situace, stejně jako vnímání role starších žen. Navíc se v různých evropských zemích odehrály důležité změny spjaté s otevřením „východního bloku“. Projekt EWA se zabývá otázkou, jak byly ovlivněny životy starších žen. V jakých společenských podmínkách vyrůstaly? Jak se pohlíželo na jejich roli, a které historické, politické a společenské události ovlivnily jejich život? A co znamená v tomto kontextu úspěšné stárnutí?

Co vlastně víme o těchto sedmdesáti i víceletých ženách žijících v našem okolí, které pohlížejí zpětně na svůj život plný profesních i osobních aktivit? S jakými rozhodujícími okamžiky svého života, jako jsou nemoci, ztráta dětí či partnerů, finanční tísně, se musely vyrovnat? Jaké profesní, společenské i jiné činnosti začaly dělat a jak pohlížejí na své stárnutí?

Sedm ženských skupin ze šesti evropských zemí pracovaly na tomto tématu od podzimu 2010 do léta 2012, v rámci vzdělávacího programu Grundtvig partnerství „Evropské ženy ve vyšším věku“ (EWA).

Osobní rozhovory jsou cestou k porozumění starším lidem. To je důvod, proč bylo cílem projektu vyvinutí a využití vedeného rozhovoru, který mohl být srovnáván. V různých zemích byly vyvinuty a použity různé techniky rozhovorů a jejich modifikace. Osobní kontakty a rozhovory byly velmi dojemné.

Rozhovory vedly ženy ve věku 50 a více let, které díky této příležitosti mohly reflektovat na jejich vlastní životní zkušenosti. Obě věkové kategorie žen (70+ a 50+) se stále musí vyrovnávat se skutečností, že existují rozdíly v možnostech vzdělávání mezi muži a ženami, že ženy častěji upozadují svou profesní kariéru na úkor rodinného života.

Projekt EWA představuje životní úspěchy vybraných žen, kterým se podařilo zvládnout složité situace a mít šťastné stáří. Množství životních příběhů dodává kuráž k aktivnímu přístupu ke stáří a k rozpoznání jeho hodnoty.

Důležitým efektem pro účastnice projektu byla možnost vyzkoušet si a využít různé informační a komunikační technologie (jako: tvorba audio a video nahrávky, filmu, prezentování v PowerPointu, příprava webových stránek) a získat tak nové dovednosti formou celoživotního vzdělávání ve fázi, kdy vlastní profesní a aktivní rodinná fáze již skončila. Pro zdokumentování rozhovorů byly rovněž využity techniky kreativního psaní.

Čtyři partnerská setkání (v Sofii, Českých Budějovicích, Ferrare a Ulmu) poskytla příležitost pro vytvoření dotazníku, prodiskutování technik vedení rozhovorů a výměnu praktických zkušeností.

Během výměn mezi ženami z různých evropských zemí, pomohl projekt také k lepšímu porozumění specifických společenských, politických a historických situací. Dalším cílem projektu bylo vytvoření sítě vzdělávání dospělých v Evropě a rozvoj přátelství.

Výsledky poskytují náhled do života starších žen Evropy a jejich stárnutí. Projekt spojil využití nových technologií jako je Skype, překladače a internetová fóra. Na konci projektu byly životní příběhy vybraných zajímavých a inspirujících žen zdokumentovány v anglickém jazyce i národních jazycích jednotlivých partnerů pomocí různých způsobů: například přepisy rozhovorů na webových stránkách, nebo nahrávky životních příběhů na DVD v této knize.

Partenariato di Apprendimento Grundtvig – Donne Europee in età avanzata (EWA)

Nella società odierna, con i progressi nelle cure mediche, non è più inusuale che in Europa le donne vivano 80 anni e più. Questo significa che cambia la situazione sociale ed economica, come pure la percezione del ruolo delle donne più anziane. Inoltre, emergono importanti cambiamenti nei vari Stati europei per l'apertura del precedente "Blocco orientale". Il progetto EWA ha affrontato il tema del come sono state influenzate le biografie delle donne più anziane. In quali condizioni sociali sono cresciute? Come era visto il loro ruolo e quali eventi storici, politici e sociali hanno determinato la vita delle donne? Cosa significa invecchiare con successo in questo contesto?

Cosa sappiamo veramente delle donne con più di 70 anni che hanno alle spalle una vita molto lunga, ricca di attività professionali e private? Quali punti di svolta e sfide, come la malattia, la perdita del compagno o di un figlio, o difficoltà finanziarie hanno dovuto affrontare? Quali attività professionali, sociali, caritatevoli o artistiche praticano e come percepiscono la loro età?

Sette gruppi di donne di sei diversi Paesi europei hanno lavorato su questo tema dall'autunno 2010 sino all'estate 2012, all'interno del Partenariato di Apprendimento Grundtvig "Donne Europee in età avanzata" (EWA). I colloqui personali facilitano la comprensione degli anziani, ecco perché l'obiettivo del progetto è stato lo sviluppo e la realizzazione di un modello di intervista standardizzato. Ciascun Paese partner ha sviluppato varie tecniche di intervista, i contatti personali e i colloqui sono stati molto coinvolgenti.

Le intervistatrici erano donne di oltre 50 anni, che attraverso l'esperienza delle interviste hanno potuto riflettere sulle proprie esperienze di vita. Entrambi i gruppi di donne (+ di 70 e + di 50 anni) devono ancora confrontarsi col fatto che le possibilità educative rimangono diverse per gli uomini e per le donne e che le donne spesso mettono da parte la propria carriera professionale a beneficio della vita familiare.

Il progetto EWA presenta la vita di donne selezionate, che sono riuscite ad essere felici in età avanzata e a padroneggiare situazioni difficili. La varietà di storie di vita incoraggia ad affrontare consapevolmente la fase di vita più avanzata e a riconoscerne il valore.

Un effetto importante del progetto per le intervistatrici è stata l'opportunità di testare ed applicare diversi strumenti tecnici (registrazioni audio e video, presentazioni di Power Point, siti web) e acquisire nuove competenze nell'ottica dell'apprendimento permanente, in una fase della vita in cui gli impegni attivi professionali e familiari sono ormai finiti. Per la documentazione delle interviste sono stati necessari non soltanto metodi di intervista verbale ma anche tecniche di scrittura creativa.

Quattro incontri internazionali (a Sofia, Ceske Budejovice, Ferrara e Ulm) hanno offerto ai partners la possibilità di sviluppare i questionari, discutere le tecniche di intervista e scambiare le esperienze pratiche. Incoraggiando gli scambi tra donne di diversi Paesi europei, il progetto ha contribuito ad una migliore comprensione delle rispettive situazioni sociali, politiche e storiche. Altri obiettivi erano l'avvio di una rete all'interno dell'educazione degli adulti in Europa e lo sviluppo di amicizie.

I risultati permettono di conoscere e capire la vita delle donne più anziane in Europa e il loro percorso di invecchiamento. Il progetto ha integrato l'applicazione dei nuovi media con strumenti come Skype, traduttori meccanici e forum su Internet. A conclusione del progetto, le storie della vita di donne europee interessanti e fonte di ispirazione sono state documentate in Inglese e nelle rispettive lingue nazionali in modi diversi: interviste sul sito web del progetto, storie di vita esemplari su un DVD e in questo libro.

Grundtvigo mokymosi partnerystė: Vyresniojo amžiaus Europos moterys (EWA)

Atsižvelgiant į progresą medicinos srityje, nieko neįprasto, kad šiandienos visuomenėje moterys gyvena 80 metų ir ilgiau. Tai reiškia, kad socialinė ir ekonominė situacija bei vyresnių moterų prisiimami vaidmenys visuomenėje keičiasi. Dar daugiau, atsivėrus „Rytų blokui“, ima ryškėti svarbūs pasikeitimai įvairiose Europos valstybėse. Projektas EWA ištyrė, kaip buvo įtakojamos vyresnio amžiaus moterų biografijos. Kokiame socialinėse sąlygose jos augo? Kaip buvo matomi lyčių vaidmenys ir kaip istoriniai, politiniai ir socialiniai įvykiai nulėmė moterų gyvenimus? Ką šiame kontekste reiškia senti sėkmingai?

Ką iš tiesų žinome apie moteris, kurioms 70 ir daugiau, žvelgiančias atgal į palyginus ilgą gyvenimo kelią, pilną profesinės ir privačios veiklos? Su kokiais lemtingais posūkiais ir iššūkiais kaip liga, partnerio ar vaiko netektis, finansiniai sunkumai joms teko susidurti? Kokia profesinė, socialinė, labdaringa arba meninė veikla jos užsiima ir kaip žvelgia į savo pačių žengimą vis į gilesnį amžių?

Septynios moterų grupės iš šešių Europos šalių dirbo prie šių klausimų Grundtvigo mokymosi partnerystėje „Vyresniojo amžiaus Europos moterys“ (EWA) nuo 2010 metų rudens iki 2012 metų vasaros.

Asmeniniai pokalbiai atveria duris į vyresnio amžiaus žmonių supratimą. Štai kodėl šio projekto tikslas buvo sukurti ir išbandyti sunormintą interviu, kuris leistų palyginti duomenis. Buvo išvystytos įvairios interviu technikos ir kiek modifikuota forma pritaikytos kiekvienoje partnerių šalyje. Asmeniniai kontaktai ir pokalbiai čia turėjo didelės reikšmės.

Tos, kurios darė interviu, buvo 50 metų ir daugiau, interviu dėka jos galėjo reflektuoti savo pačių gyvenimo patirtį. Abiejų amžiaus grupių moterys (tos, kurioms 70+ ir tos, kurioms 50+) turi priimti faktą, kad išsilavinimo galimybės lieka skirtingos vyrams ir moterims, ir kad moterys dažnai aukoja savo profesinę karjerą šeimos labui.

Projektas EWA supažindina su atrinktų moterų gyvenimo pasiekimais, tų, kurioms sulaukus senatvės, sekasi būti laimingomis ir puikiai tvarkytis sudėtingose situacijose. Gyvenimo istorijų įvairovė suteikia drąsos sąmoningai gyventi atėjus gilios senatvės fazei ir su atviromis akimis pasitikti tai, kas joje vertinga.

Projektas suteikė ypatingą galimybę interviu dariusioms moterims išbandyti įvairiausias technikas ir priemones (kaip audio ir video, filmų montavimas, PowerPoint pristatymai, interneto puslapis) ir įgyti naujų kompetencijų tame viso gyvenimo mokymosi periode, kuomet profesinė veikla ir aktyvus šeimyninis gyvenimas priartėja į pabaigą. Interviu dokumentavimui prireikė ne tik žodinių interviu metodų, bet ir kūrybinio rašymo technikų.

Keturi partnerių susitikimai (Sofijoje, Česke Budejovicuose, Ferraroje ir Ulme) suteikė galimybę sukurti klausimyną, aptarti interviu technikas ir apsieisti praktine patirtimi.

Apsikeitimų tarp moterų iš įvairių Europos šalių dėka projektas leido geriau suprasti specifines socialines, politines ir istorines situacijas. Tarp projekto tikslų buvo suaugusiųjų švietimo tinklo Europoje sukūrimas bei daugystės inicijavimas bei vystymas.

Projekto rezultatai nušviečia vyresnio amžiaus moterų gyvenimą ir jų senėjimą Europoje. Projektas integravo tokių naujųjų medijų panaudojimą kaip Skype, vertimo programos ir interneto forumai. Projekto pabaigoje atrinktos įdomiausios ir labiausiai įkvepiančios moterų gyvenimo istorijos iš visos Europos buvo dokumentuotos anglų bei nacionalinėmis kalbomis skirtingomis priemonėmis: interviu buvo patalpinti į projekto interneto puslapį, atrinkti pasakojimai sudėti į DVD ir į šią knygą.

Грюндвиг, Партньорства за познание „Възрастните жени в Европа” (EWA)

В днешното общество, с развитието и подобряването на медицинските грижи, вече не е необичайно жените в Европа да живеят до 80 годишна възраст, че и по-дълго. Това означава, че социалната и икономическа ситуация, както и представата за жените се променя. Освен това важни промени в различните европейски държави след разпадането на бившия “Източен блок”. Проектът на EWA разглежда въпроса, как това е повлияло на биографията на възрастните жени. При какви социални условия жените са израстнали? Каква е била ролята на пола и кои исторически, политически и социални събития са оказали влияние и са определили живота на жените? Какво означава успешно и активно стареене в този контекст?

Какво всъщност знаем за жените на възраст 70 +, които продължават своя живот, изпълнен с професионални и лични дейности? С какви повратни точки и предизвикателства като болест, загуба на партньор или дете, финансови затруднения, е трябвало да се справят? Кои професионални, социални, благотворителни или артистични дейности практикуват и как те възприемат остаряването?

Седем групи жени от шест европейски държави работиха по тази тема от пролетта на 2010 до лятото на 2012 година, в рамките на секторна програма „Грюндвиг”, Партньорства за познание – „Възрастните жени в Европа” (EWA).

Личните разговори „отварят вратите” към това да разберем възрастните хора. Поради това, целта на този проект беше да се разработи и приложи стандартизиран модел за интервю, който е сравним. Различни техники за интервюта бяха разработени и приложени в модифицирана форма във всяка страна-партньор. Личните контакти и разговори бяха изключително вълнуващи.

Интервюиращите бяха жени на възраст 50+, а интервютата рефлексираха на собствения им житейски опит. И двете възрастови групи (70+ и 50+) все още трябва да се справят с факта, че възможностите за образование остават различни за мъжете и жените и жените често поставят

професионалната си кариера и израстване на заден план в полза на семейния живот.

Проект "Възрастните жени в Европа" представя постиженията на избраните жени, които са успели да бъдат щастливи в напреднала възраст и в овладяването на трудни ситуации. Разнообразието от житейски истории дава кураж да се справят съзнателно с фазата на напредналата възраст и да признаят стойността и.

Важен ефект от проекта за интервюиращите беше възможността да тестват и прилагат различни технически средства (например аудио, филми и видео записи, PowerPoint презентации, уеб сайт) и да придобият нови компетенции в различните възможности за учене през целия живот, в момент, когато тяхната активна професионална и семейна фаза вече е приключила. За документиране на интервютата бяха необходими не само методи за провеждане на вербални интервюта, но също и техники за творческо писане.

Четири срещи на партньорите (София, Чешке Будеживице, Ферара и Улм) предоставиха възможността за разработване на въпросник, обсъждане на техниките за интервюиране и обмяна на практически опит. Чрез насърчаване на обмяна на опит между жени от различни европейски държави, проектът също така допринесе за по-добро разбиране на съответните специфични социални, политически и исторически ситуации. Друга цел на проекта беше създаване на мрежа в рамките на образованието за възрастни в Европа и развитието на приятелства.

Резултатите от проекта допринесоха за по-задълбочено вглеждане в живота на възрастните жени в Европа и остаряването им като процес. Проектът интегрира приложението на инструментите на новите медии, като например Skype, различните възможности за превод и интернет форумите. В края на проекта, житейските истории на избрани интересни и вдъхновяващи жени от цяла Европа бяха документирани на английски и на съответния национален език чрез различни медии: интервютата на страницата на проекта, образцови житейски истории на DVD и в тази книга.

Grundtvig-Lernpartnerschaft Europäische Frauen im höheren Alter (EWA)

In unserer heutigen Gesellschaft ist es nicht ungewöhnlich, dass Frauen in Europa 80 Jahre alt und älter werden. Das bedeutet, dass sich die sozialen, ökonomischen, gesellschaftlichen Situationen ebenso ändern wie die Rollenvorstellungen der Frauen in höherem Alter. Durch die Öffnung des früheren „Ostblocks“ zeichnen sich zudem in verschiedenen europäischen Staaten bedeutsame Veränderungen ab. Das EWA-Projekt stellte sich die Frage, wie die Biografien älterer Frauen in verschiedenen europäischen Ländern beeinflusst wurden. Unter welchen gesellschaftlichen Bedingungen sind die Frauen aufgewachsen? Wie wurde die Geschlechterrolle gesehen und welche geschichtlichen, politischen und sozialen Gegebenheiten haben ihr Leben bestimmt? Was macht dabei ein gelingendes Altern aus?

Was wissen wir nun eigentlich über Frauen 70+, die auf ein besonders langes Leben voller beruflicher und privater Aktivitäten zurückblicken? Welche Wendepunkte und Herausforderungen wie Krankheit, Verlust eines Partners oder von Kindern oder finanzielle Nöte hatten sie zu bewältigen? Welche beruflichen, sozialen, karitativen oder künstlerischen Aktivitäten üben sie aus und wie nehmen sie ihren Alterungsprozess wahr?

Sieben Frauengruppen aus sechs verschiedenen europäischen Ländern beschäftigten sich im Rahmen der Grundtvig-Lernpartnerschaft „European Women in older Age“ (EWA) im Zeitraum Herbst 2010 bis Sommer 2012 mit diesem Thema.

Das persönliche Gespräch öffnet die Tür zum Verständnis des älteren Menschen. Deshalb ging es in diesem Projekt um die Entwicklung und Anwendung eines standardisierten Interviews, um die Befragungen vergleichbar zu machen. Dabei wurden verschiedene Interviewtechniken entwickelt und in jedem Partnerland modifiziert angewandt. Die persönlichen Begegnungen in langen Gesprächen waren sehr bewegend.

Die Fragen wurden von Frauen im Alter 50+ gestellt, die durch die Interview-Erfahrung über die eigenen Lebenserfahrungen reflektierten. Beide Altersgruppen der Frauen (70+ und 50+) haben immer noch damit zu kämpfen, dass die Ausbildungssituation nach wie vor unterschiedlich ist für Männer und Frauen, die ihre berufliche Karriere oft zugunsten des Familienlebens zurückgestellt haben.

Das EWA-Projekt zeigt die Lebensleistung ausgewählter Frauen, die es geschafft haben, im Alter zufrieden zu sein und oft auch schwierige Lebenssituationen zu meistern. Die Vielfalt von Lebensläufen macht Mut, um die Phase des hohen Alters bewusst und sehenden Auges anzugehen und in ihr einen eigenen Wert zu erkennen.

Für die Interviewerinnen war ein wichtiger Effekt des Projektes, die verschiedenen Techniken auszuprobieren und zu nutzen (z.B. Tonband- und Filmaufzeichnungen, Video-Mitschnitte, PowerPoint-Präsentationen, Website) und so in einer Phase, in der die eigene berufliche und aktive Familienphase oft bereits abgeschlossen ist, im Sinne des "life long learning" sich weiterzubilden. Nicht nur die Methoden der mündlichen Befragung, sondern auch Techniken des kreativen Schreibens förderten die Abfassung der Interview-Zusammenfassungen.

Bei insgesamt vier Treffen der Partnergruppen (in Sofia, Ceske Budejovice, Ferrara und Ulm) gab es Gelegenheit, die Fragebögen zu entwickeln, sich über die Interviewtechniken auszutauschen und über die dabei gemachten Erfahrungen zu diskutieren.

Es ging im Projekt auch um den Austausch mit Frauen aus anderen europäischen Ländern, um ein verbessertes Verständnis für die jeweilige spezifische gesellschaftliche, politische und historische Situation. Außerdem sollte ein Netzwerk innerhalb der Erwachsenenbildung in Europa entstehen und sich Freundschaften entwickeln.

Die Resultate geben einen Einblick in das Leben älterer Frauen in Europa und ihr Älterwerden. Das Projekt band die Neuen Medien mit Anwendungen wie Skype, Übersetzungsmaschinen oder Internet-Foren mit ein. Am Ende des Projekts wurden die Lebensgeschichten von ausgewählten interessanten und inspirierenden Frauen aus ganz Europa in mehreren Medien dokumentiert: auf einer Website finden sich alle geführten Interviews. Exemplarische Lebensläufe wurden auf einer DVD und im vorliegenden Buch veröffentlicht, und zwar in Englisch und in der jeweiligen Landessprache.

Barbara Heinze, EWA-Group Ulm, co-coordinator

interview name	partner	born	author name
Sestakova, Jirina	Budejovice	1921	Ruiderová, Ivanka
Bočková, Marie	Budejovice	1923	Šulcová, Jaroslava
Petříková, Běla	Budejovice	1925	Tampírová, Jiřina
Jeníková, Olga	Budejovice	1925	Vondrovicová, Dagmar
Hálová, Ruth	Budejovice	1926	Vorlová, Jana
Pazderková, Vera	Budejovice	1927	Rezková, Alena
Ludíkarová, Marie	Budejovice	1931	Řeháková, Marie
Bauerová Hana	Budejovice	1931	Ruiderová, Ivanka
Tymalová Otilie	Budejovice	1934	Kruchňová, Miloslava
Švandová-Koutecká Inge	Budejovice	1936	Laudová, Blanka
Groulíková, Alena	Budejovice	1937	Mácová, Marie
Papke, Gisela	Budejovice	1938	Kuncová, Františka
Šenkýřová, Hana	Budejovice	1939	Hanáková, Jarmila
Pasolini, Francesca	Ferrara	1921	Rabuiti, Saura
Maltrasi, Rina	Ferrara	1923	Maltrasi, Francesca
Fabi, Vanda	Ferrara	1926	Fabi, Guilia
Marchetti, Bruna	Ferrara	1929	Guidetti, Liliana
Capatti, Carmen	Ferrara	1929	Guidetti, Liliana
Viadana, Angelika	Ferrara	1931	Piva, Ida
Garassina, Gigliola	Ferrara	1931	Fabbri, Gabriella
Bazzanini, Teresa	Ferrara	1934	Stasi, Susanna
Siroli, Ansaldo	Ferrara	1935	Fabbri, Gabriella
Tufani, Luciana	Ferrara	1940	Tufani, Luciana
Vecchi, Luana	Ferrara	1941	Fabbri, Gabriella
Stankūnienė, Magdalena	Kaunas	1925	Norvilienė Vitalija
Šeštakauskienė, Ona	Kaunas	1927	Paškevičienė, Liucija
Vailionytė-Vailionė, Danute	Kaunas	1927	Norvilienė Vitalija
Telksnienė, Dr., Danutė	Kaunas	1927	Katiliūtė-Shvartz, Ilona
Bačianskienė, Daina	Kaunas	1932	Striogaitė, Erika
Krištaponienė, Aldona	Kaunas	1934	Bigenienė, Laimutė
Morkūnaitė, Elvida	Kaunas	1935	Pliopaitė, Jadvyga
NN, Marija	Kaunas	1938	Urbanaitė, Dana
Dranseikienė, Irena	Kaunas	1941	Dranseikienė, Irena
NN, Rūta	Kaunas	1941	Valančienė, Virginija
NN, Guiseppa	Macomer	1922	Lostia, Caterina
Cuscusa Carta, Caterina	Macomer	1930	Rossini, Anna; Molinas, Maria Agnese
Arru, Nicolina	Macomer	1931	Rossini, Anna; Deiola, Sara
Dasso, Iolanda	Macomer	1932	Rossini, Anna; Deiola, Sara
Deriu, Antonella	Macomer	1936	Rossini, Anna; Deiola, Sara
Melis, Annita	Macomer	1937	Deiola, Sara;
Porcu, Santina	Macomer	1938	Rossini, Anna; Botta, Gina
Cartamantiglia, Angiolina	Macomer	1939	Rossini, Anna; Deiola, Sara
Scarpa, Pina	Macomer	1939	Botta, Gina;
Renzo, di Paola	Macomer	1940	Molinas, Maria; Agnese Battelli

interview name	partner	born	author name
Franca, Daskolova Vera	Sofia	1920	Daskolova, Vera
Ivanova, Elena	Sofia	1931	Ivanova, Elena
Todorova, Maria	Sofia	1934	Todorova, Maria
Zgalevska, Atanasa	Sofia	1947	Sgalevska, Atanasa
Bucholtz, Erika	Ulm	1918	Nguyen-Duong, Brigitte
Lang, Ruth	Ulm	1922	Koolwijk, van, Monika
Richter, Dorothee	Ulm	1923	Nguyen-Duong, Brigitte
Subklew, Dr Erna	Ulm	1923	Dietmann-Beckert, Erdmute; Nguyen-Duong, Brigitte
Neufeld, Hildegard	Ulm	1924	Dietmann-Beckert, Erdmute
Wellhäuser, Susanne	Ulm	1924	Dietmann-Beckert, Erdmute; Heinze Barbara
Bonarius, Elfriede	Ulm	1924	Dietmann-Beckert, Erdmute
Herrmann (PS), Marianne	Ulm	1927	Heinze, Barbara
Gugel, Lilli	Ulm	1929	Freitag-Wagner, Christel
Don, Hannelore	Ulm	1929	Dietmann-Beckert, Erdmute
Gabler, Erdmute	Ulm	1929	Freitag-Wagner, Christel
Nolte, Prof, Renate	Ulm	1930	Spatz-Zöllner, Erla
Schmidt(PS), Maria	Ulm	1931	Spatz-Zöllner, Erla
Schiffer, Lieselotte	Ulm	1931	Koolwijk, van, Monika
Davidenkoff, Uta	Ulm	1932	Wende Agathe, Heinze Barbara
Danner (PS), Susanne	Ulm	1935	Heinze, Barbara
Trenner, Annemarie	Ulm	1936	Koolwijk, van Monika
Budde, Margret	Ulm	1936	Dietmann-Beckert, Erdmute
Ludwig, Juliane	Ulm	1936	Dietmann-Beckert, Erdmute
Müller(PS) Sieglinde	Ulm	1936	Heinze, Barbara
Kunstmann, Erna	Ulm	1937	Koolwijk, van, Monika
Lengerke von, Christiane	Ulm	1937	Spatz-Zöllner, Erla
Durka, Dorothee	Ulm	1939	Freitag-Wagner, Christel
Bach, Diemut	Ulm	1939	Dietmann-Beckert; Erdmute; Heinze, Barbara
Kögel, Roswitha	Ulm	1940	Koolwijk, van, Monika
Maiß, Gisela	Ulm	1941	Dietmann-Beckert, Erdmute; Heinze, Barbara
Stiedl, Hermione	Wien	1921	Spitaler, Herta; Zupanich Gerti
Freiberger, Lotte	Wien	1923	Zupanich, Gerti; Rastl, Charlotte
NN, Anna Maria	Wien	1927	Rastl, Charlotte
Fischer, Jutta	Wien	1937	Spitaler, Herta; Marek, Elisabeth; Fischer, Jutta
Eppel, Willie	Wien	1939	Spitaler, Herta; Zupanich, Gerti
Wolf, Wanda	Wien	1940	Rigal, Elisabeth; Pührer, Julia
Horn, Gerlinde	Wien	1941	Marek, Elfriede; Schablegger, Veronika
Heindl, Hilde	Wien	1941	Zupanich, Gerti
Pfeifer, Brigitte	Wien	1941	Kreczy, Irmgard; Zimmermann, Elisabeth
Wissgott, Inga	Wien	1942	Wust, Sylvia; Stiegler, Liselotte
Mandl, Heidi	Wien	1942	Stiegler, Lieselotte; Schablegger Veronika
Lersch, Antonia	Wien	1951	Rahmatian, Ulrike; Zupanich Gerti
Tischberger, Margit	Wien	1951	Zupanich Gerti

Ruth Hálová, born 1926

Childhood: 1926 – 1939

Ruth was born 85 years ago in Český Krumlov into a Czech-German Jewish family. The same year she was born, her father died as a result of serious health problems developed during the soldiers' march home across Siberia at the end of World War I. She grew up with her mother, a sister and her grandmother, who took care of the household.

In those times Český Krumlov had about 9000 inhabitants, where the Czechs and the Germans cohabited. However, at the end of the thirties the political mood escalated and anti-semitic feelings started to appear.

One autumn morning in 1938 Ruth was expelled from school by her German classmates because of being Jewish. Soon after, her entire family had to leave Český Krumlov and moved to Prague. Her mother knew what was coming and applied for Ruth and her sister to emigrate to England, a project organized by Sir M. Nicholas Winton.



War years spent in England: 1939 – 1945

At the end of June 1939, thirteen-year-old Ruth boarded one of the trains that carried 669 Jewish children to England. For six years, until the end of the war, she lived in a completely different environment. In the character of the English people she discovered many values she admires and respects still today: objectivity, tolerance, endurance, hardiness. The people who helped her became her life-long friends. The stay in England fundamentally changed her future career, and indelibly influenced her character and attitude to life. She learned English very well, graduated from high school and found her life goal, life pattern, and profession – microbiology.

Comeback: 1945 – 1972

In 1945 Ruth returned to Prague and, as one of very few children spending the war-time in England, reunited with her mother who had survived internment in Terezin.

After coming back she pursued her dream: she studied microbiology and received her doctorate at the Faculty of Charles University in Prague. After that she worked in laboratories and taught microbiology at the medical school.

Life in retirement

When her children grew up and she had reached retirement age, she began to think about the meaning of life and thus commenced her search for spiritual truth. She and her husband moved to South Bohemia. After many years, she returned home, to the place of her childhood, to Český Krumlov.



Ruth with the Danish queen in 1994, Český Krumlov.

At the end of the eighties, when Sir Nicholas Winton was approaching eighty, some documents came to light, which enabled the „Winton children“ to find out who had saved their lives and gave them the opportunity to thank their rescuer. Thankfully, Sir Winton has lived to a high age and „his children“ have been able to meet him many times and express their respect, love and gratitude „for having been born a second time“. In the nineties, Ruth became essential for the town municipality as a translator and guide for numerous distinguished national and international guests.

Activities in retirement

Today Ruth Hálová is a very social and active lady, who enjoys life and has many interests as well as friends. Several years ago she was widowed, but is surrounded by her children and grandchildren, sharing their joys and accomplishments. She translates English and German literature, mainly on spiritual topics. She published a vegetarian cookbook and sings in a choir. Her spiritual journey brought her to India, where she met her guru Sai Baba and where she adopted a „daughter“, whose education she supports.

Last year she translated and published a book called „Begging for Change“ about abandoned Indian children, their upbringing and education.

Interviewed by Jana Vorlová

Ruth Hálová, nar. 1926

Dětství 1926 – 1939

Narodila se před 86 lety v Českém Krumlově v česko-německé židovské rodině. Tatínek jí zemřel ve stejném roce, kdy se narodila, na následky anabáze, kdy se jako legionář po ukončení 1.světové války vracel přes Sibiř do vlasti. Vyrůstala s maminkou, sestrou a babičkou, která zaměstnané dceři s dětmi a domácností vypomáhala. Český Krumlov byl tenkrát devítitisícovým městem, kde do nástupu Hitlera v Německu k moci žili spolu Češi a Němci bez problémů. Situace se ale koncem třicátých let vyostřovala, začaly se objevovat antisemitské nálady a na podzim 1938 byla Ruth svými německými spolužáky vykáznána ze třídy, protože byla Židovka. Brzy nato se celá rodina odstěhovala do Prahy. Matka pochopila, co se chystá a přihlásila obě dcery na emigraci do Anglie, kterou organizoval Nicholas Winton.



Válečná léta v Anglii 1939 – 1945

V červenci 1939 nastoupila tedy třináctiletá Ruth do jednoho z vlaků, které odvezly 669 židovských dětí do Anglie. Šest let až do skončení války žila v úplně odlišném prostředí a s lidmi, kteří nesmazatelně ovlivnili její charakter i životní postoje. V povaze britského člověka poznala mnoho hodnot, které obdivuje a váží si jich: objektivitu, toleranci, vytrvalost, otužilost. Poznala lidi, kteří ji pomáhali vytvářet si a zažívat pocit domova, což se jim podařilo, takže navždy zůstali jejími přáteli. Naučila se výborně anglicky, odmaturovala na střední škole a našla svůj životní cíl, své povolání – mikrobiologii.

Návrat do vlasti, studium, povolání 1945 – 1972

V roce 1945 se vrátila do Prahy a jako jedna z mála dětí, které válečná léta strávily v Anglii, se setkala se svou matkou. Zde si splnila i svůj profesní sen. Vystudovala vysněnou mikrobiologii, získala doktorát na Přírodovědecké fakultě University Karlovy v Praze. Pracovala v laboratoři,

vyučovala biologii na zdravotní škole. Vychovala syna a dceru. Odchod do důchodu a setkání s Nicholasem Wintonem 1972 – 1980
Po odchodu do důchodu se s manželem vrátila domů, do místa svého dětství, do Českého Krumlova. Až koncem 80.let se dozvěděla, kdo vlastně tenkrát zachránil život židovským dětem tím, že zorganizoval jejich odjezd do Anglie i komu mohou za svou záchranu poděkovat. Sir Nicholas Winton se dožil požehnaného věku a jeho „děti“ se s ním mohly ještě mnohokrát sejít a vyjádřit mu lásku, úctu a poděkování – „poděkování za to, že jsme se podruhé narodily“, říká paní Ruth.



Aktivní stáří 1990 – 2012

Ruth Hálová žije stále společensky. Díky svým jazykovým znalostem je nepostradatelnou tlumočnicí a průvodkyní státních návštěv a významných hostů města. Je nezdolná optimistka, raduje se ze života, má mnoho zájmů a přátel. Před několika lety ovdověla, s dětmi i dnes již dospělými vnuky prožívá jejich radosti i úspěchy. Překládá z němčiny a angličtiny, vydala vegetariánskou kuchařku, zpívá v pěveckém sboru. Její duchovní cesta ji přivedla do Indie, kde našla svého guru Sai Babu a kde má také „adoptovanou dceru“, kterou finančně podporuje, aby se mohla vzdělávat. V minulém roce přeložila a vydala knihu „Malí prosebníci“ pojednávající o opuštěných indických dětech, jejich výchově a vzdělávání.

Jana Vorlová

Inge Svandova – Koutecká, born 1936

Childhood:

Inge spent her childhood in Prague, in an art-oriented family, with her mother being an academic painter with musical talent and her father an academic architect loving opera, theatre, violin and piano. Her father wanted her to become an architect, introducing her to Prague's architecture, and her mother wished her to become a medical doctor. However, Inge was strongly influenced by her family environment with many relatives being well known musicians and artists. Since her childhood she was learning to play the piano and singing and her dream was to become a singer.



The first success

Inge experienced her first success still being a child in a marionette theatre, where she sang and received a beautiful doll. Her next performance, during a school trip to caves, was so successful, that an article about it appeared in newspapers. This made her decide to apply for music studies at a Music Conservatory. But then the war began! Due to time spent in bomb shelters and malnutrition she fell ill with tuberculosis and hepatitis and had to stay in hospital for more than half a year.

Studies

Despite her parents' wishes and her ill health she pushed her music studies through. At the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague she became interested in opera directorship as well as in stage and costume design.

Life at theatre

Her professional career started before the final defence of her Diploma thesis. In 1960 she was offered to appear as a guest in the Southbohemian Theatre in České Budějovice and after several successful directorships she became the first and the only female opera director in theatres

in Czechoslovakia of that time. She was leaving Prague with a heavy heart as her mother became ill and her father lost his job for political reasons. But she has followed her teacher's advice not to stay in Prague to become an assistant of older directors, but to move out and start her own career. After five years of work in the theater a new stage director, Vlastimil Koutecky, arrived. After several plays they worked on together they formed a very successful work team. A year later they married. For another eleven years they worked in the theatre, cooperating with a wide range of great music conductors, musicians, artists and singers. There they could apply many innovative ideas.

Then they moved to Pilsen and continued in their work there for another twenty years. Inge considers these to be the most important years in her life, during which she artistically matured and developed her own style of directorship. These years also strengthened their marriage as well as their artistic efforts. She has been invited as a guest performer to various national and international theatres and for her 188 successful performances received many important regional, national and international awards.



Costume design and teaching

After her marriage to her architect husband, Inge started to engage in costume design and still does it today. Alongside her artistic activities she has also been involved in teaching. She taught solo singing and acting at secondary schools and universities and continues doing so until these days, even though only for few students and friends.

Life in retirement

For the last 20 years Inge has lived in Český Krumlov, is still involved in arts, performance, costume design, theater directorship and other projects at historical places, castles and towns. She devotes her admirable energy in civic life and social activities for which she received in 2010 and 2011 a prize of the town of Český Krumlov.

Interviewed by Blanka Laudová

Inge Švandová – Koutecká, 1936

Dětství

Dětství prožila v Praze, v umělecké rodině s matkou, akademickou malířkou s hudebním nadáním a otcem, akademickým architektem milujícím operu, divadlo, hru na housle a klavír. Otec z ní chtěl mít architektku, vodil ji na procházky za poznáváním pražské architektury, maminka si přála, aby se stala lékařkou. Rodinné prostředí plné příbuzných a známých muzikantů a umělců na ní silně působilo. Od dětství se učila hrát na klavír a zpívat a toužila se stát zpěvačkou.



Životní úspěchy

První životní úspěch zažila na jevišti loutkového divadla, kde zazpívala a dostala krásnou panenku. Další vystoupení, na školním výletě v punkevní jeskyni, už mělo takový úspěch, že o něm psaly i noviny. To již byla rozhodnuta, že se přihlásí ke studiu zpěvu na konzervatoři. Ale začala válka! Vážně onemocněla, v důsledku pobývání v krytech a podvýživy dostala tuberkulosu a žloutenku a více než půl roku trávila v nemocnici.

Léta studií

Navzdory přání rodičů i svému zdravotnímu stavu si ale prosadila studium zpěvu na konzervatoři a po té na Akademii múzických umění. Tam si posléze přibrala studium operní režie a z vlastního zájmu docházela na přednášky jevištního a kostýmního výtvarnictví. Jablko nepadlo daleko od stromu.

Život na divadle

Profesní dráhu zahájila ještě dřív, než stačila obhájit diplomovou práci. V roce 1960 dostala nabídku k hostování do Jihočeského divadla v Českých Budějovicích a po několika úspěšných režii se stala první a jedinou operní režisérkou v divadelním angažmá v tehdejší Československu!

Z Prahy odcházela s těžkým srdcem, protože maminka byla již hodně nemocná a otec ztratil z politických důvodů práci. Poslechla tehdy svého učitele, který jí radil, že pokud zůstane v Praze, bude jen starším režisérům přísluhovat, zatím co venku bude mít možnost se hodně naučit. Po pěti letech jejího angažmá nastoupil do divadla nový šéf výpravy, akademický architekt Vlastimil Koutecký. Po několika společných inscenacích se stali úspěšným pracovním týmem a práce je sblížila natolik, že i týmem partnerským. Za rok se vzali a v divadle tvořili celých jedenáct let. Spolupracovali s řadou vynikajících dirigentů, hudebníků, výtvarníků a zpěváků a



uplatnili zde mnoho novátorských režijních počinů. Mimořádné byly režie připravované pro zámecké Otáčivé hlediště a Barokní divadlo v Českém Krumlově.

Po té odešli do Plzně a v tamním divadle pokračovali v úspěšné režijní a scénografické práci celých dvacet let. A jak sama říká, byla to léta v jejím životě nejvýznamnější, doba dozrávání, dovršení uměleckého názoru a dotváření vlastní režisérské linie, období šťastné, které posílilo

jak manželství, tak i umělecké snažení. V té době byla také zvána k hostování v operních divadlech u nás i v cizině, jak na scénách klasických, tak v přírodních amfiteátrech. Za 188 úspěšných inscenací, které připravila, obdržela mnoho významných ocenění regionálních, celostátních i zahraničních, třeba titul zasloužilá umělkyně či Jihočeská Thálie za celoživotní dílo!

Kostýmní tvorba a pedagogická činnost

Výtvarné nadání, které prokazovala už v dětství, rozvíjela na škole a zvláště pak po sňatku při práci s architektem Kouteckým. Začala se věnovat návrhům kostýmů a pokračuje v tom i dnes! Vedle všech svých uměleckých aktivit se po celou dobu věnovala pedagogické činnosti, vyučovala sólový zpěv a herectví na středních i vysokých školách, měla mnoho žáků a spousta z nich na ni s uznáním vzpomíná. Několik žáků a přátel učí soukromě ještě nyní.

Současnost

Posledních 20 let žije v půvabném jihočeském městě Český Krumlov, dodnes je stále umělecky aktivní, navrhuje kostýmy a režíruje divadelní představení a další projekty, realizované na historických hradech, zámcích a ve městech. Svoji obdivuhodnou energii uplatňuje i v oblasti života občanského a činnosti spolkové, za r. 2010 i 2011 byla oceněna Cenou města Český Krumlov.

Blanka Laudová

Carmen Capatti, born 1929

I remember my childhood with pleasure – the affection and strength of my family, my mother’s struggle to make me autonomous in daily life as soon as possible. It was important to her that I knew how to read and write (I attended school up to and including the fourth year of elementary school), how to sew, embroider, cook and keep the house tidy. Furthermore, I had to learn to work as a farmhand in the fields and look after the farm animals.

The birth of my sister in 1938 was a reason for hope for me.

I also have bad memories, like my father’s emigration in 1938 and his enlisting in the reserves – he was later sent to Pesaro as a coastguard.

Other negative experiences I remember were the fascist invasion and malaria – an illness that struck me when I was 9 years old and had started work as a farm hand.

When I got involved in the worker’s struggle, politics became my interest, profession and occupation. My aspirations corresponded with the practice of political action.

My life led in the direction of social research, and in-depth reading. Current affairs, continuous self-evaluation, hobbies, interests and study were integral parts of my life’s journey.

Family has always meant a lot to me – intimacy, support and mutual respect; it allowed me to put my choices into action; every member has been able to live their own life, understanding how to manage their time and finding ways of dealing with the demands of daily life.

As a mother I am satisfied by how I brought up my only daughter; I devoted all my attention to her, sharing the responsibility with my husband. Our relationship permits each of us to be a point of reference to the other, without compromising our personal autonomy.

In the same way, we were able to share our niece’s upbringing.



During my youth, there were mixed positive and negative experiences; there was the war and the partisan struggle. One memory prevails – the early death (at only 59 years if age) of my mother-in-law – an independent woman who gave me great strength. At my first political assembly, surrounded by law enforcement officers, my mother-in-law waited until late at night to hug me.

In the age from 40 to 60 years, as an administrator, my life was characterized by political work.

From 1952 to 1956, I was a town councillor for Lagosanto (a small town in the province of Ferrara); I then worked as provincial councillor for health and welfare for 13 years.



After that I was an administrator at the local health authority for 10 years. I worked towards the establishment of social, health and educational services, including alternatives to institutional care for the mentally ill. At that time, these services set a shining example to the rest of the nation. Along with these work commitments, I was also involved with the Italian Women's Union and, obviously, taking care of my family, without missing out on the pleasure of meeting and travelling with friends.

I'm very attached to my past history, and precisely for this reason, when my experience as an administrator in the public authorities came to an end, I became President of a Municipal Care Home – an experience which lasted 14 years.

The most difficult time in my life was, without doubt, my childhood, due to the war.

In recent times I have read a lot, travelled and met up with friends. Furthermore, I'm attempting to write an account of my social activities – meeting those associates still living in order to honour a complex series of testimonies of civic responsibility and participation, of energy and beauty, of sacrifice and satisfaction.

Moreover, I have taken up voluntary work for the Italian Women's Union again.

I'm convinced that, more so today than in the past, it is important to have something to live for. I live for the future – I would like to finish writing my account and to speak about my experiences with young women.

Thinking about death makes me sad – being able to think about something else helps me live better.

In the future, I'll continue my social activities, sharing convivial meetings and holidays with my husband and friends. I look on with pride at the magnificent cultural development my niece is undertaking.

I'm happy about my past, and the difficult moments form part of it.

The most important values for my life are self-respect, equal civil rights for all, and the value of responsibility, even when the family permits work, friends and differences to be share

Interviewed by Liliana Guidetti

Carmen Capatti, nata 1929

Ricordo volentieri la mia infanzia, l'affetto e la forza dei miei familiari. L'impegno di mia madre per rendermi autonoma nella vita quotidiana il più presto possibile. Per lei era importante che io sapessi leggere e scrivere (ho frequentato la scuola fino alla IV elementare) cucire, ricamare, cucinare e riordinare la casa. Inoltre dovevo imparare i lavori dei campi e curare gli animali di allevamento.

La nascita di mia sorella nel 1938 fu per me motivo di speranza.

Ho anche ricordi negativi come la migrazione all'estero di mio padre nel 1938 e il suo arruolamento nei riservisti poi destinato a Pesaro come guardia costiera.

Altre esperienze negative che ricordo sono l'invasione fascista e la malaria, malattia che mi ha colpita quando avevo 9 anni e avevo iniziato a lavorare come bracciante agricola.

Quando mi trovai coinvolta nelle lotte bracciantili la politica divenne per me scuola, professione e lavoro. Le mie aspirazioni corrispondevano alla pratica dell'azione politica.

La vita mi portava verso la ricerca sociale, le letture approfondite, l'informazione quotidiana, il confronto continuo; hobby, interessi, studio erano pienamente inclusi nel mio percorso.

Per me la famiglia ha sempre significato affetto, intimità, sostegno e rispetto reciproco; mi ha permesso la realizzazione delle mie scelte, ogni componente ha saputo vivere il proprio percorso sapendo mediare tempi e modi del prendersi cura delle necessità nella vita quotidiana.

Come madre sono soddisfatta di come ho cresciuto la mia unica figlia, ho avuto per lei il massimo delle attenzioni possibili, condividendo gli impegni con mio marito. Lo stile delle nostre relazioni ci permette di essere l'uno riferimento dell'altro, nel rispetto delle autonomie individuali.

Allo stesso modo abbiamo saputo condividere la crescita della nipote.





Negli anni della mia giovinezza le esperienze positive e negative si mescolano, c'era la guerra e la lotta partigiana. Un ricordo prevale, la morte prematura (a soli 59 anni) di mia suocera: una donna autorevole che mi dava forza. Al mio primo comizio, accerchiata dalle forze dell'ordine, mia suocera mi ha aspettato fino a tarda notte per abbracciarmi.

Dai 40 ai 60 anni la mia vita è stata caratterizzata dall'impegno politico come amministratrice.

Dal 1952 al 1956 sono stata consigliera comunale a Lagosanto (cittadina in provincia di Ferrara); poi ho ricoperto la carica di assessora provinciale alla Sanità e Assistenza Sociale per 13 anni.

In seguito sono stata l'amministratrice dell'Unità Sanitaria Locale per 10 anni. Ho lavorato per la creazione dei servizi sociali, sanitari ed educativi, ivi compresi quelli alternativi ai ricoveri in istituti o manicomi. A quel tempo questi servizi a Ferrara rappresentavano una eccellenza a livello nazionale.

Contemporaneamente a questi impegni lavorativi ero impegnata nell'Unione Donne Italiane e ovviamente mi prendevo cura della mia famiglia senza rinunciare al piacere degli incontri e viaggi con gli amici.

Sono molto legata alla mia storia passata e proprio per questo finita la mia esperienza di amministratrice negli enti pubblici sono diventata presidente

della Casa di Riposo Comunale, esperienza durata 14 anni.

Il periodo più difficile della mia vita è stato senza dubbio l'infanzia a causa della guerra.

In questo periodo della mia vita leggo molto, viaggio e incontro gli amici. Sto inoltre cercando di scrivere il racconto della mia presenza sociale incontrando i compagni ancora viventi per onorare una complessa testimonianza di partecipazione e responsabilità civile, di energia e di bellezza, di sacrificio e soddisfazione.

Inoltre ho ripreso il mio volontariato nell'Unione Donne Italiane.

Sono convinta che oggi più di allora sia importante vivere per qualcosa, io per il futuro vorrei concludere la scrittura della mia testimonianza e parlarne con le giovani donne.

Pensare alla morte mi rende triste, poter pensare ad altro mi aiuta a vivere.

Per il futuro continuerò la mia vita sociale, condividere con mio marito e gli amici incontri conviviali e vacanze. Seguo con orgoglio il magnifico percorso culturale che mia nipote sta facendo.

Sono felice della mia vita passata ed i momenti difficili ne fanno parte.

I valori più importanti nella mia vita sono il rispetto di sé, l'uguaglianza dei diritti civili, il valore della responsabilità. Anche la famiglia quando consente vera condivisione del lavoro, gli amici e la diversità.

Intervista: Liliana Guidetti

Teresa Bazzanini, born 1934**1930 - 1950**

I was born in 1934 and became an orphan at age 5, when my father died. My mother raised me with worship of his memory.

I remember the terror of the first bombing. We then left the city on a cart drawn by oxen bearing our household belongings. It took nearly one day to do 20 km. Nevertheless, that period was the best of my childhood: we were in the country and I could freely play in the courtyard with 12 other children. I was an



only daughter and I used to play alone, so that was a paradise for me. We used to stay outside from morning till night all together as a horde playing furiously. I remember the nights, the smoke scent of the fireplaces burning to prepare the dinner, it was the hour when reluctantly we used to go home. After every bombing we got back to Ferrara by bicycle (20 km) to check whether our home was still standing. The road was of clay, we needed to pay attention not to enter the wheels into cart tracks when it had recently rained.

I remember the heart-throb when, passing over the S. George's bridge, we saw the ruins caused by the bombs. I was 9.

1950 – 1970

I graduated as a teacher in July and in September I passed the qualifying examination for primary school. I taught two years in a Swiss boarding school, then I found a job in Italy. I got married and I had 5 daughters. I completed the competitive education examination when I already had 3 children.

During the day I worked 8 successive hours, then at home I took care of my children. I went to attend lessons from 10 p.m. to 12 p.m. after putting the children to bed.

1970 – 1990

When my daughters had grown up, I hoped to have some more time for myself, but my mother, who always had helped me a lot, had an inexorable

senile decay that went on for 7 years. Even while going on working I was able to keep her at home with me, thanks to the help of my three eldest daughters, who took turns in caring for their grandmother.

1990

In 1980 I retired and retook possession of my time. I could do all that things I couldn't before because of work and family: travels, singing, cultural courses, friends... and more time to dedicate just to myself. Then I helped in raising 6 grandchildren here in Italy and 2 in Holland.



A bad experience of my childhood was my father's death. I missed him a lot, he was the one who helped me dressing, who took me out for strolls, who played with me and who built toys for me. I was 5 at the time of his death. I was told he went up to heaven and I remember that, I used to run for long-time in the garden, hoping for him to see me.

A close family is strength. I have always been helpful to my daughters, I

taught them to be helpful and supportive between each others. My sons-in-law are well integrated and altogether we are very strong. Each person of the family lives his own life, but if one of us calls because of a problem we all run to help, nobody shirks. This for me is a great satisfaction. Of course I prefer to get off by myself, but sometimes we all need some help, e. g. in case of accidents or a disease.

During each life, there are difficult moments to go through. As for me, my father's death was such a difficult moment and also the economic difficulties until I started to work.

Also growing up 5 children was not easy. I was always asleep on my feet and I didn't have time to dedicate to myself. Another difficult moment was when my mother became sick and I took care of her for many years.

A last ordeal for me was when I was operated because a tumour had to be removed.

I never withdrew into myself and I'm convinced that there is always something or someone to live for. I make a lot of plans and I often manage to realize them. I'm very happy about my life despite the difficult moments.

Interviewed by Susanna Stasi

Teresa Bazzanini, nata 1934**1930 - 1950**

Sono nata nel 1934 e sono rimasta orfana di padre a 5 anni. Mia madre mi ha cresciuta nella venerazione per la sua memoria.

Ricordo il terrore al primo bombardamento. Sono sfollata su un carro tirato da buoi che portava le nostre masserizie. Abbiamo impiegato quasi una giornata per fare 20 km. Questo periodo è stato il più bello della mia infanzia; eravamo in campagna e nel cortile potevo giocare liberamente con altri 12 bambini. Io figlia unica, abituata a giocare sola, è stato il paradiso. Vivevamo fuori dalla mattina alla sera tutti in branco giocando furiosamente. Ricordo le sere, l'odore del fumo dei camini accesi per preparare la spesa, era l'ora che, a malincuore, si rientrava in casa.



Dopo ogni bombardamento tornavamo a Ferrara in bicicletta (20 km.) per controllare se la nostra casa era ancora in piedi. La strada era in terra battuta, bisognava fare attenzione a non finire con la ruota nei solchi dei carri quando era piovuto da poco. Ricordo il batticuore quando, superato il ponte di S. Giorgio, vedevamo le macerie provocate dalle bombe. Avevo 9 anni.

1950 – 1970

Mi sono diplomata maestra a luglio, e a settembre ho superato l'esame di abilitazione per la scuola materna. Ho insegnato due anni in un collegio in Svizzera, poi ho trovato lavoro in Italia. Mi sono sposata e ho avuto 5 figlie. Ho vinto il concorso magistrale che avevo già tre figlie. Di giorno lavoravo (8 ore consecutive) poi a casa badavo alle bambine. Andavo a lezione dalle 22 alle 24 dopo aver messo a letto le bambine.

1970 – 1990

Cresciute le figlie speravo di avere un po' di tempo per me, ma mia madre, che mi ha sempre aiutato molto, ha avuto un veloce inarrestabile decadi-

mento senile che è durato 7 anni. Pur continuando a lavorare sono riuscita a tenerla a casa con me grazie all'aiuto delle mie tre figlie più grandi che facevano i turni per badare alla nonna.

1990

Sono andata in pensione e mi sono riappropriata del mio tempo. Ho potuto fare tutto quello che prima non potevo fare causa il lavoro e la famiglia: viaggi, canto, corsi culturali, amicizie ... più tempo da dedicare a me stessa. Poi ho contribuito alla crescita di 6 nipotini qui in Italia e 2 in Olanda.



Un'esperienza negativa della mia infanzia fu la morte di mio padre, ho sentito molto la sua mancanza, era lui che mi aiutava a vestirmi, mi portava a spasso, giocava con me e mi costruiva i giocattoli. Avevo 5 anni. Mi avevano detto che era salito in cielo, ricordo che io sperando che lui da lassù mi vedesse facevo lunghe corse in giardino.

Una famiglia unita è una forza. Io sono sempre stata disponibile per le mie

figlie, ho insegnato ad essere disponibili e solidali tra loro. I miei generi si sono ben integrati e siamo veramente una forza.

Ognuno fa la sua vita, ma se uno chiama per un problema tutti corrono, nessuno si sottrae.

Questo per me è motivo di grande soddisfazione.

Naturalmente preferisco cavarmela da sola, ma a volte c'è proprio bisogno di un aiuto come in caso di infortunio o di malattia.

Nella vita ci sono momenti difficili da attraversare. Per me un momento difficile è stata la morte di mio padre e problemi economici fino a che non ho iniziato a lavorare.

Anche la crescita di 5 figlie non è stato un periodo facile, ero sempre morta di sonno e non avevo mai tempo da dedicare a me stessa.

Altro momento difficile è stato quando si è ammalata mia madre e l'ho accudita per molti anni.

Ultima prova per me difficile è stato quando sono stata operata di tumore.

Non mi sono mai chiusa in me stessa e sono convinta che ci sia sempre qualcosa e qualcuno per cui vivere. Faccio moltissimi progetti e molto spesso riesco anche a realizzarli. Sono molto felice della mia vita pur con momenti difficili.

Intervista: Susanna Stasi

Danutė Vailionytė-Vailionė, born 1927

Childhood

Danutė Vailionytė is a historian, who worked as a teacher and lecturer in Kaunas for many years. She became famous at the age of 62-years, when she took the initiative to restore the Kaunas branch of a pre-war Lithuanian organization of highly educated women like teachers, doctors, and engineers. The organization was closed during the Soviet regime.

Danutė Vailionytė was born in 1927 in Kaunas. Her father was a well known professor, her mother an accountant. The family had two daughters.



Danutė describes as the happiest period of her life the time, when she was attending Kaunas girl's gymnasium "Aušra". "The war was going on, - said Danutė Vailionytė, - we were freezing in the unheated gymnasium, were hungry, darned our socks secretly, but the time was special - more than ever we had big dreams and a hope, believing that the war would end one day and our dreams would come true. The most important values of my life that I am keeping until now like charity and compassion, have been formed at that time by the teachers of the girls gymnasium "Aušra"."

Choosing the profession her mother had the largest impact. She said: "Danutė, you have a talent for writing." Hence she wanted to study art history, but there wasn't such a course at Kaunas University, so she chose history instead. "In implementing the life goals there is no such thing like a lack of conditions, – says Vailionytė. – Everyone creates conditions by oneself, there is nobody to blame. If one didn't achieve one's own objectives, it means that one didn't care enough about them. When I was young I attended a drama studio, I was talented. Already I played in the theater, participating in the mass scenes. But I quit the theater, because I wanted to study history. I went to Vilnius, finished the studies of history and became a teacher. I never regretted my choice. "



Creating the home

About the second period of her life – marriage, family, career – Danutė has only positive memories. Her husband was the founder of the silk factory in Kaunas and has worked in senior positions in it. Their marriage took place in 1955.

Vailionytė has two daughters and four grandchildren. From 40 to 60 years old, she did everything to make her home the nice place to live for her and her children. Danutė loves beauty. Her home is full of nice pictures of the best Lithuanian artists. During this period she also worked and traveled extensively.

Restoring the women's organization

When Lithuania regained its independence in 1990, Danutė as a historian found more possibilities to explore Lithuania's past. She is especially interested in the period between the two world-wars (1918-1940). Before the war, there existed an alliance of Lithuanian women graduates from universities. Danutė, when she was still a child, found the organization's magazines at her father's library and liked to read them, there were interesting stories about women. When Lithuania regained its independence, the archive of the alliance was soon discovered in Vilnius.

When Danutė Vailionytė was 62 years old, she shouldered a new task: to restore the Lithuanian Association of University Women Kaunas branch.

The Association, led by Danutė Vailionytė, until now made four important researches about women, held open lectures for the society and published several books.

Fighting for shorter family names for women

Danutė was the first who drew the attention of the Lithuanian society to the discrimination against women by the use of their family names. The suffix -ytė, -aitė, -ute, for example, in the name Rutkutė, demonstrates that this is an unmarried woman. The suffix – ienė, for example, Budrienė, indicates that this is a married woman. Vailionytė showed, based on the authority of the linguist Yablonsky, that Lithuanian family names of women must be without suffixes. She participated in many debates in the press and TV. She won, and now women of the country are thankful because they are able to have shorter family names without suffixes. Danutė Vailionytė is satisfied about her life style, even if not all dreams have come true. She has many plans for the future, at present she has finished a book about her father, “Commemoration of Botanist Liudas Vailionis”, it will be published soon. Then she wants to write two books on the interwar period. One of them will be on “Honorata” Ivanauskienė – wife and inspirer of the famous pre-war professor and academician Tadas Ivanauskas.

Life filled with meaningful activities

Danutė Vailionytė's goal in life was and is to do good and enjoy the beautiful things in life. These days she is busy reading, collecting material for her next book, writing, and attending concerts of classical music. She likes to watch TV and as a historian is always interested in the latest political news. She much appreciates the new media, but has no time for computers and internet, even does her writings in the old-fashioned way – by hand.

Danutės opinion about the future of society is that it depends on ourselves. It is important to be satisfied with what you have and what you achieve and not to blame others. She speaks about the importance of arts and humanities, which develop a more sensitive world view, and that love and compassion are the most important values of all.

Interviewed by Vitalija Norvilienė

Danutė Vailionytė-Vailionė, imė 1927

Vaikystė

Danutė Vailionytė gimė 1927 m. Kaune. Jos tėvelis buvo žinomas to meto profesorius, botanikas Liudas Vailionis, mamytė – buhalterė. Šeimoje buvo dvi dukterys.

D. Vailionytė-Vailionė yra ištekėjusi, turi dvi dukras bei 4 anūkus. Laimingiausiu savo gyvenimo laikotarpiu Danutė vadina mokymąsi Kauno „Aušros“ mergaičių gimnazijoje. „Vyko karas, – pasakoja Danutė Vailionytė, – šalome nekūrenamoje gimnazijoje, buvome alkanos, slapta adėme kojines, bet laikas buvo mums ypatingas – kaip niekada turėjome didelių svajonių ir vilties, tikėjome, kad karas vieną dieną baigsis ir mūsų svajonės išsipildys. Svarbiausios mano vertybės kaip artimo meilė ir užuojauta, kurių laikausi ir dabar, buvo suformuotos būtent jau tada, „Aušros“ mergaičių gimnazijoje.“

Daugiausiai įtakos renkantis profesiją turėjo mama. Ji sakė: „Danute, turi sugebėjimų rašyti“. Norėjo studijuoti meno istoriją, bet Kaune nebuvo tokių studijų, todėl pasirinko istoriją. „Kalbant apie gyvenimo tikslus ir jų įgyvendinimą, manau, kad tokio dalyko, kaip sąlygų neturėjimas nebūna, – sako Vailionytė. – Sąlygas kiekvienas susikuria pats. Jeigu nepasiekėte to, apie ką svajojote, nereikia nieko kaltinti. Vadinasi nepakankamai jums tai rūpėjo. Aš jaunystėje lankiau dramos studiją, buvau gabi. Jau vaidinau tikrame teatre, masinėse scenose. Bet mečiau teatrą, nors mane labai kalbino tokios klaidos nedaryti, galėjau tapti aktore, bet aš norėjau studijuoti istoriją Vilniuje. Išvažiavau į Vilnių, baigiau istorijos studijas, tapau mokytoja. Ir nesigailiu savo pasirinkimo iki šiol.“

Namu kūrimas

Apie vedybas, šeimą, karjerą – prisiminimai tik pozityvūs. Danutės vyras buvo šilko fabriko Kaune įkūrėjas ir dirbo jame vadovujančiose pareigose. Jų vedybos įvyko 1955 m. Nuo 40 iki 60 metų ji kūrė savo namus, kad būtų gražūs, tvarkingi, būtų vaikams gera augti. Taip pat dirbo ir daug keliavo.



Atkūrus Lietuvos Nepriklausomybę 1990 m., Danutei kaip istorikei atsirado galimybė giliau pasidomėti Lietuvos praeitimi. Ją ypač domino 1918-1940 m. periodas. Lietuvos baigusių aukštuosius mokslus moterų sąjunga Lietuvoje veikė prieškario laikotarpiu, vaikystėje Danutė tėvelių namuose mėgdavo skaityti šios organizacijos leidžiamus žurnalus, kuriuose rasdavo įdomių novelių bei pasakojimų apie moteris. Atkūrus Lietuvos Nepriklausomybę, Vilniuje buvo atrastas archyvas su medžiaga apie šią organizaciją ir buvo nutarta ją atkurti.

Moterų organizacijos atkūrimas

Danutė Vailionytė, būdama 62 m. amžiaus, ėmėsi naujos veiklos – atkurti Lietuvos universitetinių moterų asociacijos Kauno filialą. „Mes pirmosios atkreipėme dėmesį į Lietuvos moterų istoriją, – pasakoja Danutė, – Lietuvos moterys siekė būti savarankiškos kaip ir kitų tautų moterys, bet ėjo savu keliu. Jau Lietuvos Didžiojoje valdė pilis, o 1920 m. gavo rinkimų teisę“.

Lietuvos universitetinių moterų asociacija, kuriai vadovavo Danutė Vailionytė, atliko keturis svarbius tyrimus moterų temomis, vyko paskaitos, skirtos plačiajai visuomenei ir buvo parašytos knygos: Dalios Kargaudienės „Lietuvių deivės ir dievai“, Anelės Butkuvienės „Įžymiosios Lietuvos moterys“ ir Virginijos Jurėnienės „Lietuvių moterų visuomeninė veikla XIX a. pab. – XX a. pradžioje“.

Kova už trumpesnes moterų pavardes

Vailionytė pirmoji Lietuvoje atkreipė dėmesį į moterų diskriminavimą pavardžių klausimu. Lietuvių kalboje priesaga –ytė, -aitė, -utė aiškiai parodoma, kad tai netekėjusi mergina, o – ienė, kad ištekėjusi moteris. Ji subūrė komitetą ir pasiremdama garsiu prieškario autoritetu kalbininku J. Jablonskiu ėmėsi iniciatyvos įtvirtinti trumpesnių moteriškų pavardžių rašybą, kuri nediskriminuotų moterų. Šalies spaudoje ir TV vyko plačios diskusijos apie moteriškų pavardžių rašybą, kuriose labai aktyviai dalyvavo D. Vailionytė. Ji laimėjo kovą, įstatymu buvo užtikrinta teisė trumpinti pavardes, daug moterų yra dėkingos D. Vailionytei už šį pasiekimą ir jau

pasikeitė pavardes į trumpesnes bei skambesnes be priesagų.

D. Vailionytė gavo specialų apdovanojimą iš tuometinio LR Prezidento Algirdo Brazausko už straipsnius aktualiomis moterims temomis. Savo gyvenimo stiliumi Danutė Vailionytė patenkinta, nors ne visos svajonės išsipildė. Kalbėdama apie ateitį, moteris turi konkrečių planų: šiuo metu ji jau parašė ir planuoja išleisti knygą apie Kauno universiteto kūrimą bei savo tėvo, žymaus botaniko įnašą kuriant universitetą, monografija vadinasi „Botanikas Liudas Vailionis“.

Kupina prasmingos veiklos

Po to dar nori parašyti dvi knygas apie tarpukario periodą. Viena iš jų bus apie Honoratą Ivanauskienę, žymaus prieškario profesoriaus akademiko Tado Ivanausko žmoną ir įkvėpėją. Danutės Vailionytės tikslas – daryti kiek galint gero ir gražaus gyvenime. Dabar ji labai užsiėmusi skaitymu, medžiagos savo knygoms rinkimu, rašymu, lankosi klasikinės muzikos koncertuose ir nuolat seka paskutines politines naujienas. Naująsias medijas ji labai vertina, daug galima sužinoti dėka interneto. Tačiau neturi laiko, kada užsiimti tuo, netgi rašo senoviškai – ranka.

Gyvena dabartimi. Bet ir praeities negali atmesti. Asmeninė praeitis ją lydi nuolatos. Apie mirtį stengiasi negalvoti. Tačiau mintimis dažnai kalbasi su žmonėmis, kurie iškeliavo anapus, ypač su tais, kurie buvo artimi ir ją mylėjo. Tai jai labai padeda sunkiomis akimirkomis.

Ji mano, kad visuomenės ateitis priklausys nuo mūsų pačių. Kokie būsimė ir kaip į viską žiūrėsime. Svarbu būti patenkintu tuo, ką turi ir ką pasiekei, vadinasi tiek teturėjai jėgų. Nekaltinkime kitų. „Jaunimui patarčiau plėsti savo humanitarines žinias, – sako Vailionytė, – turėti idėjų, kurias pagrindžia humanitarinis supratimas. Ir ugdyti savyje užuojautą kitiems žmonėms“.

Interviewed by Vitalija Norvilienė

Elvida Morkūnaitė Čaplikienė, born 1935

Hiding from persecutions

Elvida Morkūnaitė Čaplikienė was born in 1935, in Kaunas. She was a child, who could receive the best education, because her father was Alfonsas Morkūnas, a Lithuanian army officer and her mother Onutė Kazlauskaitė a primary school teacher. But at 26 years old, coming back to Lithuania after a long exile, she was illiterate. Hungry and exhausted by a difficult job in the far and cold Siberia, Elvida was remembering how she was dancing at the Christmas Tree at the age of five, dressed in a beautiful white dress, embroidered by the blue-bottles.



In 1940, the Soviet Union occupied Lithuania, the Lithuanian army was dissolved. Morkūnas family managed to escape from Kaunas to the father's native village Juodžiūnai. In 1942, when Elvida was only seven years old, her mother suddenly died. At the beginning of 1944, Alfonsas Morkūnas, along with his two brothers, chose the way of armed resistance to the Soviet invaders and became a partisan. From that moment on, her and her brother's lives became full of a danger, because they were trying to escape from repressions of the NKVD, which played the role of Gestapo in the Soviet Union. While most of the children at the same age went to the school, Elvida and her brother Teisutis were hiding, going from village to village, and people helped them. The two children had a cow and a goose going with them, and this was the way they were feeding themselves.

Long journey to Siberia

Her father was killed in 1949. Three years later she and her brother were caught by NKVD and exiled to a Gulag. Like all other exiles they traveled to Siberia by train in the wagon for animals.... She remembers that she had only one piece of bread for a thousands kilometers long journey which a forger gave her the last minute before leaving Lithuania. A new period started for Elvida in Krasnoyarsk. Although at only 14, she was not yet of adult age, she was forced to work in a factory. The factory worked in three shifts, without any free days, and stopped

only twice: before the New Year and once when Stalin died. She had to handle bricks: from cars to the machinery, from machinery to the burning stove, then the burned bricks back into the cars.

In 1960, Elvida came back to Lithuania for a month vacation for the first time together with her brother and she did not return to Krasnoyarsk any more. Within three years she completed the required course of eight classes and in 1963 successfully passed the exams. Thanks to the hard labor in Siberia, Elvida had a strong, well-muscled body, but the Siberian cold had damaged her skin in some places. A doctor advised her to go as often as possible to the Baltic Sea. Elvida went to do sports and joined the factory's sports team, which during the



summers had training camps at the Baltic Sea. The doctor's recommendation became true: the marks on the skin of the young woman disappeared. But her decision to go for sports had another consequence: she met her future husband Algirdas Čaplikas – the famous basketball player of the legendary Lithuanian basketball team "Žalgiris". They married, and in 1964, the son Marius was born.

The bookshop

In 1985, Elvida retired. She collected 10 books and 16 newspapers about the Lithuanian resistance, put a table in the building of Union of Political Prisoners and Exiles in Kaunas, and soon opened a small bookshop. Now it is hard to believe that this honorable woman, who reads all books she is selling, was illiterate at the age of 26. Once her granddaughter asked what would she change in her life if she could? Elvida answered, “Nothing”. She would change nothing in her difficult and significant life.

Interviewed by Jadvyga Pliopaitė

Elvida Morkūnaitė Čaplikienė, born 1935

Persekiojimai

Elvida Morkūnaitė Čaplikienė gimė 1935 m. liepos 5 d. Kaune, Lietuvos kariuomenės vyr. puskarininkio Alfonso Morkūno ir pradinių klasių mokytojos Onutės Kazlauskaitės šeimoje. 1940 metais, Sovietų Sąjungai okupavus Lietuvą, buvo likviduota Lietuvos kariuomenė. Nuo grėšiančių represijų Morkūno šeimai pavyksta pasislėpti gimtajame Juodžiūnų kaime Ukmergės apskrityje



1942 metais, kai Elvidai tebuvo septyneri metai, netikėtai mirė mama. Tėvas toliau mažamečiais vaikais rūpinosi vienas. 1944 metų pradžioje Alfonsas Morkūnas kartu su dviem broliais pasirenkino ginkluoto pasipriešinimo sovietiniams okupantams kelią. Tuomet, kai dauguma jos vienmečių ėjo į mokyklą, ji su močiute ir broliu stengėsi išvengti NKVD represijų.

1945 metais sribai iki pamatų sudegino Morkūnų sodybą, Elvidai, broliui ir močiutei pavyko išsigelbėti, bet jie buvo pasmerkti slapstyti. Taip ir keliavo iš vienos vietos į kitą, kartu vesdamiesi likusią karvę ir žąsį, kuri kas antrą dieną padėdavo po kiaušinį.

Ilgą kelionę į Sibirą

1952 m. rugpjūčio mėnesį Elvida ir jos brolis atsidūrė gyvuliniame vagonė, kuriuo buvo vežami tremtiniai į Sibirą, į šaltąjį Krasnojarską. Nors Elvida dar buvo nepilnametė, ji buvo įdarbinta Krasnojarsko plytų fabrike, kuriame buvo dirbama trimis pamainomis. Darbas fabrike buvo kelioms minutėms sustabdomas tik per Naujuosius Metus ir išimtinė proga, kai mirė Stalinas.

1960 metais Elvida su broliu atvyko mėnesiui atostogų į Lietuvą ir į Krasnojarską nebegrįžo. Bet... jai buvo 26 metai, o ji nemokėjo nei rašyti, nei skaityti. Mergina per tris metus ji baigė privalomą 8 klasių kursą ir 1963 metais išlaikė egzaminus. Sunkaus darbo Sibire dėka ji turėjo tvirtą raumeningą kūną, bet Sibiro šalčiai ant jo paliko raudonas nušalimų dėmes. Gydytojų nuomone jūros vanduo, karšta saulė, smėlis bei jaunystė turėtų tai išgydyti. Būdama labai stipri fiziškai, Elvida

pradėjo atstovauti fabriko sporto komandai, kurios vasaros treniruočių stovyklos vykdavo prie Baltijos jūros. Po kelių vasarų, praleistų prie jūros, gydytojų prognozės išsipildė - nušalimų žymės išnyko. Elvidos sprendimas sportuoti turėjo įtakos ir jos asmeniniam gyvenimui. Treniruotės dažnai vykdavo Ažuolyno parke, ten treniruodavosi profesionalūs sportininkai. 1963 metais ji susipažino su legendinio Kauno „Žalgirio“ krepšinio klubo krepšininku Algirdu Čapliku. Pažintis baigėsi vedybomis, 1964 metais porai gimė sūnus Marius.



Knygynėlis

1985 metais Elvida išėjo į pensiją. Ji surinko 10 knygų ir 16 laikraščių rezistentinė tematika ir Laisvės alėjoje prie Politinių kalinių ir tremtinių sąjungos pastato pradėjo pardavinėti turimą literatūrą. Dabar net sunku patikėti, kad ši garbingo amžiaus moteris, perskaitanti visas knygas, kuriomis prekiauja, būdama 26 metų amžiaus nemokėjo nei skaityti, nei rašyti. Elvidą su jos knygomis galima sutikti beveik kiekviename tremtinių renginyje, nepriklausomai kuriame Lietuvos kampelyje jis bevyktų.

Moters atmintyje liko, kaip ji būdama gal penkerių metų, šoka Kauno Karininkų

Ramovės salėje prie kalėdinės eglutės, aprengta balta markizeto suknele, išsiuvinėta mėlynomis rugiagėlėmis - vaizdą, kurį su skausmu prisimindavo Sibire. Elvida dabar jaučiasi laiminga, džiaugiasi, kad jai pavyko nugalėti visas gyvenimo negandas, o juos artimiesiems nebegresia joks pavojus. Kartą anūkė jos paklausė, ką ji pakeistų savo gyvenime, jeigu turėtų tokią galimybę. Elvida nieko nekeistų, nes tai buvo jos gyvenimas ir ji priėmė viską, ką likimas lėmė.

Jadvyga Pliopaitė

Antonella Deriu, born 1936

She turned her pain into a resource for the benefit of her neighbours

Antonella Deriu lives in Bosa, a village not far from Macomer, Sardinia. Antonella lives alone in a big house full of memories and objects coming from her humanitarian travels in far-off countries. She enjoys good health and satisfying economic and social conditions, but she often suffers from loneliness and melancholy.

**Childhood**

Although born during World War II, Antonella spends her childhood serenely in a close-knit family of five people: parents and three children. As a child she has no idea of what growing up means. She likes studying, but she is forced to interrupt her studies at the 2nd year of high school, because they need her at home. However, she can devote herself to some activities like embroidering and attending Catholic Action, which provides her with human and religious personal training. In her life, this has always been a great help. At the age of 23, she meets and marries her ideal man: a man who makes her happy and satisfied. After one year Luisa, her first and only daughter, is born. She makes very beautiful things for her: fine crochet, knitted and filet works, a valuable trousseau, thinking of her daughter's future as a wife and mother. She feels that her life is really full, though, for about 15 years, she had to leave Bosa and settle in other small towns in Sardinia for the sake of her husband's work

Maturity

Her daughter grows up, studies and takes a degree in medicine. Luisa becomes a pediatrician, dividing her commitments between work and volunteering in the Italian Red Cross, where she becomes a regional inspector and on behalf of which she also goes to war zones to treat children. In 2004, four days after a sudden return from Iraq on a military plane, Luisa suddenly dies. Antonella, widowed only three years earlier, is totally depressed.

Difficult moments

The most difficult moments in Antonella's life are definitely those subsequent deaths: first of her 74 years old husband, and then of her dearest daughter. As a matter of fact, after her husband's death, her daughter Luisa, an exceptional woman, helped Antonella to get out of apathy caused by her great sorrow. Luisa encourages her mother, giving her the right spurs to move forward.

Where can a woman find the strength to face the ordeal of losing her young and only child, whose death she had never expected? It is just in her dead daughter, that Antonella finds the purpose and guide of her existence. Luisa's spiritual presence shows her the right way and helps her to overcome that terrible void in her life. The knowledge that her daughter Luisa would not have liked to see her mother living in isolation and despair pushes An-



tonella to continue the work of voluntary service and social engagement in which she lavished all her energy, in order to alleviate the sufferings of children in the Third World. So Antonella decides to carry on all the activities her daughter Luisa had started but not finished.

In moments of absolute suffering, Antonella finds help, support and consolation in her great religious faith and in the proximity of a lot of her daughter's friends, who appreciated Luisa's great personal and professional endowments and in the numerous messages and tokens of love from people

who knew Luisa and her great work for others.

Her present life

Antonella lives in everlasting memory of her daughter, still present in every corner of the house through photographs, children's drawings dedicated to her, certificates of merit and esteem, and personal items. Through the computer, Antonella reviews the images that were most dear to Luisa and visits the sites that talk about her and her work in far-off places, tormented by war or poverty. Those images are her daily fuel. It is what she needs to carry out the important commitments she made in the name of Luisa and of the Association dedicated to her (Luisa Monti Onlus), founded by some friends of the young girl. Antonella and other volunteers of the Association go to the Philippines every year for one month. They also go, for one month, to Kenya and Tanzania in order to bring help and to deliver funds and collected materials (food, medicines, clothing, everyday objects). These are two months of great hardship and difficulty she faces willingly, always supported by the ideals that guide her life. She has already prepared the ticket for the next departure to Tanzania.

She keeps on following her daughter's voluntary service, considering this decision an absolute positive experience and the best way to transform such a sad and painful personal event into a resource for the benefit of the others.

"Luisa Monti Onlus" Association

Luisa Monti Onlus Association, funded with the slogan "Let's fly high", aims at helping children in poor countries, especially children suffering from aids and being war disabled. There are 160 members, several good deeds realized and many others planned for the future. Antonella constantly collaborates in all initiatives with great zeal: meetings (also with students), exhibitions of the association activities, contests and rewardings for children, concerts and much more.

Apart from the Association, Antonella also takes an active part in the University of the Third Age in Bosa and the diocesan Catholic Action.

Interviewed by Anna Rossini and Sara Deiola

Antonella Deriu, nata 1936

Ha trasformato il suo dolore in una risorsa per gli altri

Antonella Deriu vive a Bosa, una cittadina non lontana da Macomer. Vedova, provata dal dolore, capace però di reagire positivamente alle avversità, vive sola in una grande casa piena di ricordi e di oggetti provenienti dai suoi viaggi umanitari in Paesi lontani. Gode di buona salute e di soddisfacenti condizioni economico-sociali, ma soffre spesso di solitudine e di malinconia.

**La giovinezza**

Benché siano gli anni della seconda guerra mondiale, vive serenamente la sua infanzia in una affiatata famiglia composta da cinque persone: genitori e tre figli. Da piccola non ha un'idea precisa di quel che vuol fare da grande. Le piace studiare, ma è costretta a interrompere i suoi studi al 2° anno delle superiori, perché in casa c'è bisogno di lei. Può dedicarsi, però, ad alcune attività che le piacciono: ricamare e frequentare l'Azione Cattolica, cui deve la sua formazione personale, umana e religiosa che nella vita le è stata sempre di grande aiuto. A 23 anni incontra e sposa il suo uomo ideale: un uomo che la rende felice ed appagata. Dopo un anno nasce la sua prima ed unica figlia Luisa, "la gioia e la luce dei suoi occhi". Per lei prepara cose bellissime: finisimi lavori all'uncinetto, ai ferri e in filet, un corredo prezioso, pensando al suo futuro di sposa e di madre. Sente che la sua vita è veramente completa, anche se, per circa 15 anni deve lasciare Bosa e stabilirsi in altri paesi della Sardegna per esigenze di lavoro del marito.

La maturità

Sua figlia cresce, studia, si laurea e diventa medico pediatra, dividendo i suoi impegni tra il lavoro e il volontariato nella Croce Rossa Italiana, di cui è ispettrice regionale e per conto della quale si reca anche in zone di guerra per curare i bambini. Nel 2004, quattro giorni dopo un repentino rientro dall'Iraq su un aereo militare, Luisa, improvvisamente, muore. Antonella, diventata vedova solo tre anni prima, precipita nello sconforto più totale.

I momenti difficili

I momenti più difficili nella vita di Antonella sono certo quelli successivi alla morte del marito settantaquattrenne, prima, e della carissima figlia, poi. Dopo la scomparsa del marito è la figlia Luisa, donna eccezionale, che, standole vicina e facendole sentire tutto il proprio affetto, l'aiuta a uscire dall'apatia in cui il dolore l'ha fatta precipitare; è lei che la incoraggia e le dà gli stimoli giusti per andare avanti. Dove può trovare una donna la forza di affrontare la durissima prova della perdita della propria giovane ed unica figlia, la cui morte improvvisa mai si sarebbe aspettata e mai avrebbe voluto vivere? Antonella, ancora una volta, trova proprio nella figlia morta la guida della propria esistenza. È proprio lei con la sua costante presenza spirituale a indicarle la strada e farle superare il vuoto dell'esistenza. La consapevolezza che la sua Luisa non avrebbe voluto vederla vivere nell'isolamento e nella disperazione spinge Antonella a continuare l'opera di volontariato e l'impegno sociale nei quali lei si era profusa, per alleviare le sofferenze dei bambini del Terzo Mondo. Antonella decide di intraprendere quello stesso cammino, anche per portare a termine alcune opere che sua figlia ha iniziato, ma non completato.

Nei momenti di più assoluta sofferenza trova aiuto, sostegno e consolazione nelle parole del suo parroco, nella grande fede religiosa che da sempre la anima, nella vicinanza dei tanti amici di sua figlia, nei numerosi messaggi e attestati di affetto, di stima e apprezzamento alla stessa rivolti da tante persone che l'hanno conosciuta e ne hanno apprezzato le grandi qualità umane e professionali.

Il suo presente

Antonella vive nel perenne ricordo della propria figlia, ancora presente in ogni angolo della casa attraverso fotografie, disegni di bambini a lei dedicati, attestati di merito e di stima, oggetti personali. Il computer, che ha imparato a usare dopo la sua scomparsa, è il mezzo che le permette di rivedere le immagini che a Luisa erano state più care e di visitare i siti che parlano di lei e del suo lavoro in luoghi lontani e martoriati dalla guerra o della povertà. Quelle immagini sono il suo carburante quotidiano, quello di cui ha bisogno per portare avanti gli importanti impegni che si è presa, in

nome della sua Luisa e dell'associazione a lei dedicata (Luisa Monti Onlus), nata per iniziativa di alcuni amici della giovane. Antonella con altri volontari dell'Associazione ogni anno si reca per un mese nelle Filippine e per un mese in Kenia e Tanzania per portare aiuto e per consegnare i fondi e i materiali raccolti (viveri, farmaci, indumenti, oggetti di uso comune). Sono due mesi di grandi disagi e difficoltà, che affronta volentieri sempre sostenuta dagli ideali che la guidano. Ha già pronto il biglietto per la prossima partenza con destinazione Tanzania.

Considera la decisione di continuare il cammino di volontariato della figlia un'esperienza assolutamente positiva e il modo migliore per trasformare in risorsa a beneficio del prossimo un evento per lei tanto triste e doloroso.

L'Associazione "Luisa Monti Onlus"

La Luisa Monti Onlus, nata con lo slogan "Voliamo in Alto", ha lo scopo di portare aiuto ai bambini disagiati dei Paesi poveri, soprattutto a quelli ammalati di AIDS o invalidi a causa della guerra. Conta 160 iscritti e diverse opere di bene già realizzate, altre in fase di realizzazione, altre in progetto. Antonella collabora con zelo a tutte le iniziative di autofinanziamento e divulgazione delle attività dell'Associazione: incontri (anche con gli studenti delle scuole), allestimento di mostre delle attività, concorsi e premiazioni per bambini, convegni culturali, concerti ed altro.

Ma Antonella non si occupa solo delle iniziative della Onlus, è parte attiva anche nell'Università della terza età di Bosa e nell'Azione Cattolica diocesana.

Intervista: Anna Rossini and Sara Deiola

Paola Di Renzo, born 1940

The light at the end of a tunnel

Separated from her husband, Paola lives alone in a beautiful house with a nice tawny setter and a cat. She is a lively, nice, good mixer, art lover woman, who paints with success, even from an economic standpoint. She also works with the English school she founded.

Paola is an always present mother and grandmother. She is engaged in a lot of activities and maintains a number of social relationships.



Biographical notes

Paola was born in Chieti, Abruzzo, in 1940. She has been living in Sassari since 1969. She grows up in a tidy, honest and multi-generation family: maternal grandparents, parents, a brother. The most reminiscent things she remembers about her childhood are: her mother's illness, suffering from multiple sclerosis since when Paola was 8 years old, and obedience.

She studies with good grades and would have liked to study medicine, but her father is opposed because this choice would commit her much and divert her attention away from looking after her infirm mother. Paola instead takes on the faculty of foreign languages.

She gets married in 1961 at the age of 21, then moves to Sicily because of her husband's work and starts working as a teacher, making great efforts to integrate into a community still very closed and conservative referring to the role of women in family and social contexts. Her three children were born in Sicily.

In 1966, her husband's job leads them to Sardinia, in Sassari, where in 1982 she decides to leave school, because of family and personal problems: Paola and her marriage are in a deep crisis, but a serious illness of her husband convinces her to stay with him in order to save their relationship. Paola recalls those years as an intense but exhausting period, characterized by a difficult relationship with her husband, a self-centered and dominant man, who wants to concentrate all his wife's attentions and energies upon himself.

In '86 she opens a school of English, the English Center, which is very



successful. In 2000, Paola puts an end to her difficult and painful marital relationship, which was in a deep crisis for a long time.

Hard times

At first her mother's illness, then a long, very long, troubled marital relationship. Her husband is a handsome, well-educated and charming man, with an extraordinary powerful delivery and a "vocation" for the abuse of power and destructiveness, which stem from a difficult personal history. He wants to convince her that she would not exist without him since she is his creation, a satellite that shines only by reflected light. The work, her children and her husband's care, who is often sick, do not leave time for herself. But, in the meantime, the psychic pain and a feeling of inadequacy increase, threaten her balance, and she feels that she can not go on in this way.

Her children, now grown-up, are all equally underestimated and overwhelmed by a father too self-centered to think of others. Paola would like to separate but her husband is ill, seriously this time, so that she decides to keep close to him again. She can not leave him, but she needs help to survive. Paola undergoes analysis for 5 years and starts studying psychology. She wants to learn how to communicate with her husband, to "regain" him, but also to become aware of their relationship.

In 1986, she opens an English school, which is very successful. This event makes her husband more and more wicked. He has quit his job and, even after his full recovery, is not concerned about anything anymore. He can not

stand the comparison, steps up efforts to demolish his wife psychologically and tries to avert his wife from their friends. He isolates himself and wants to cut his wife off.

Paola seeks comfort and an escape from hell in painting, her old passion. But it is not enough. Her children are grown up, she realizes she must leave her husband in order to save herself. In 2000 she puts an end to her marital relationship.

Her present

You can define it as the light at the end of the tunnel. Today Paola is a happy woman, active and full of interests. She works and, finally, loves and even rates herself highly.

In the morning, after a walk with her dog, she goes to work at the school of English; in the evening she likes painting, doing yoga, meeting friends, taking care of the garden. Paola follows the events and the current problems with close attention. She has been part of "My City", a political-cultural association, for several years. As an artist she has participated in numerous national and international competitions, receiving excellent awards. Her work can be found on the website <http://www.absolutearts.com/paoladirenzo/>

She has exhibited successfully in Italy and abroad, loves her job and finds it rewarding. Paola uses her computer to keep abreast of the times and communicate. She has very good relationships with her children: her first daughter is a teacher and has 2 children; the second one is a musician, lives in Bologna and also has 2 children; the third son is a skipper and goes around the world. She is a thoughtful and heedful mother and a grandmother, educates her grandchildren with various forms of art, brings them to the theater and she often crosses the sea to help her daughter in Bologna. And when her husband is in need, there she is, after all. Under these premises, the old age does not scare, it is just another time of life.

Interviewed by Maria Agnese Molinas and Franca Battelli

Paola Di Renzo, nata 1940

La luce in fondo al tunnel

Separata dal marito, vive da sola in una bella casa con un simpatico setter fulvo e un gatto.

E' una donna vivace, simpatica, molto socievole, amante dell'arte, pratica la pittura con buon successo, anche dal punto di vista economico; collabora con la scuola di inglese da lei fondata.

E' una madre e una nonna sempre presente; è impegnata in molte attività e mantiene numerosi rapporti sociali.



Note biografiche

Nata a Chieti, in Abruzzo, nel 1940, dal 1969 vive a Sassari. Cresce in una famiglia ordinata, onesta, multigenerazionale: nonni materni, genitori, un fratello. Le cose che più ricorda della sua infanzia sono la malattia della madre, sofferente di sclerosi multipla da quando lei aveva 8 anni, e l'obbedienza. Studia con profitto e vorrebbe fare medicina, ma il padre si oppone perché gli studi la impegnerebbero troppo e la distoglierebbero dall'accudimento della madre inferma. Ripiega sul diploma e poi sulla facoltà di lingue straniere.

Si sposa nel 1961, a 21 anni, si trasferisce in Sicilia per il lavoro del marito e comincia a lavorare come insegnante, compiendo grandi sforzi per integrarsi in una comunità ancora molto chiusa e tradizionalista rispetto al ruolo della donna nel contesto familiare e sociale. In Sicilia nascono i suoi tre figli.

Nel 1966 il lavoro del marito la porta in Sardegna, a Sassari, dove nel 1982, per problemi familiari e personali, decide di lasciare la scuola: Paola e il matrimonio sono in profonda crisi, ma una grave malattia del marito la convince a stargli vicino e tentare di salvare il rapporto. Paola ricorda quegli anni come un periodo intenso ma faticoso, caratterizzato da un rapporto difficile col marito, uomo egocentrico e dominante che accentra su di sé tutte le attenzioni e le energie della moglie.

Nel '86 apre una scuola di Inglese, the English Center, che ha molto successo. Nel 2000 pone fine al rapporto coniugale, un rapporto difficile, doloroso e in profonda crisi da tempo.



I momenti difficili

Prima la malattia della madre, poi un lungo, lunghissimo, tormentato rapporto coniugale. Il marito è un bell'uomo, colto e affascinante, con un'eccezionale capacità dialettica e una "vocazione" alla prevaricazione e alla distruttività, che gli derivano da una difficile storia personale. Vuole convincerla che senza di lui non esisterebbe in quanto una sua creazione, un suo satellite che brilla solo di luce riflessa.

Il lavoro e la cura dei figli e del marito, spesso malato, non le lasciano tempo per sé stessa, ma intanto il dolore psichico e il senso di inadeguatezza aumentano, minacciano il suo equilibrio, sente di non farcela più.

I figli, anche loro sottovalutati e schiacciati da un padre troppo egocentrico per pensare agli altri, sono ormai grandi, Paola vorrebbe separarsi ma il marito si ammala, questa volta gravemente, e decide di stargli ancora vicino. Non può lasciarlo, ma lei per sopravvivere ha bisogno di aiuto: entra in analisi per 5 anni, studia psicologia: vuole imparare a comunicare col marito, a "riconquistarlo", ma anche ad acquisire consapevolezza del loro rapporto.

Nel 1986 apre una scuola di inglese che ha successo e questo incattivisce ancora di più il marito che, invece, ha lasciato il lavoro e, anche dopo la com-

pleta guarigione, non si occupa più di nulla: lui non sopporta il confronto, intensifica i tentativi di demolizione psicologica della moglie, tenta di allontanarla dagli amici, si isola e vuole isolarla. Paola cerca conforto e una via di fuga dall'inferno anche nella pittura, sua antica passione.

Ma non basta. I figli sono già grandi, capisce che per salvarsi deve lasciarlo: nel 2000 pone fine al rapporto coniugale.

Il suo presente

Si può definire la luce in fondo al tunnel. Oggi Paola è una donna serena, attiva, piena di interessi, lavora e, finalmente, stima e ama anche sé stessa. Al mattino, dopo la passeggiata col suo cane, lavora alla scuola di inglese; alla sera dipinge e crea altri lavori artistici con le stoffe (wallhanging), fa yoga, incontra gli amici, cura il giardino e l'orto. Segue con attenzione le vicende e i problemi attuali, ha fatto parte per diversi anni dell'associazione politico-culturale "Città mia". Come artista ha partecipato a numerosi concorsi nazionali e internazionali, ricevendo ottimi riconoscimenti (alcuni suoi lavori sono presentati nel sito web <http://www.absolutearts.com/paoladirenzo/>)

Ha esposto con successo in Italia e all'estero, ama il suo lavoro e ne è gratificata. Usa il computer per tenersi aggiornata e comunicare, ha ottimi rapporti con i figli: la prima figlia abita a Sassari, insegna e ha 2 figli; la seconda è musicista, abita a Bologna e ha 2 bambini; il terzo fa lo skipper e gira per il mondo. E' una madre e una nonna premurosa e attenta, educa i nipoti a diverse forme d'arte, li porta a teatro e varca spesso il mare per aiutare la figlia a Bologna.

E quando il marito ha bisogno, lei c'è, nonostante tutto.

Con queste premesse la vecchiaia non fa paura, è solo una stagione della vita.

Intervista: Maria Agnese Molinas e Franca Battelli

Elena Ivanova, born 1931

Elena Ivanova is an 81 years old woman. She was born in one of the biggest towns in Bulgaria, which is near the black sea – Bourgas, but now she is living in a small village in another part of Bulgaria. She has 2 daughters and 4 grandchildren – two girls and two boys. She has a high educational level – she is a teacher.



“I was born in Bourgas. My father was born in Belomorska Trakia. My grandfather was a soldier. He was 4 years old when the Balkan war began. One night Turkish soldiers attacked their home, raped his mother and after that killed her. The neighbors helped him and they become migrants in South Bulgaria. One man and his family adopted him.”

“Sorry, I am not sure that this story is interesting for you, but I think that the history of the family is very important for the individual life. ”

“I lived in Bourgas together with my family – 2 brothers and one sister. When I was 23 years old I met my future husband. It was a love at first sight. He was a soldier in the town. I saw him 3 times and then he left, going back to his home town. 3 years we wrote letters to each other and when we understood that we loved each other – we got married. And this was one of the most difficult periods in my life – because my parents did not agree with this - he was from a poor family and they thought that I will have a difficult life with him. But they were not right.”

“When I went to the home town of my husband I became a teacher in one of the schools there. 7 years later I became a director of the school and was in that position till the time when I became a pensioner. But this was a new beginning of my life. I started to work with children from minority groups, who have problems in their mental development and with social adaptation. For about 20 years now I have been working with these children and it is a real pleasure for me. I help them for their social inclusion. Nowadays, 7 of them have high education and 5 of them have their own business.”

“Because of my health problems now I’m working with only one child, who is 9 years old, but he cannot read and write. I am sure that I can help him and I do all my best.”

“I am very proud with my children and they are the most important thing in my life. Together with my husband – my best friend”.

Self-portrait

Elæna Iwanowa , Родена 1931



Elæna Iwanowa е на 81 години. Родена е в един от големите градове в България – Бургас, но сега живее в малко селце в област Монтана. Има 2 дъщери и четири внука- две момичета и две момчета. Учител е.

“Родена съм в Бургас. Баща ми е роден в Беломорска Тракия. Дядо ми е бил войник. Една нощ турски войници нападнали дома на баща ми, изнасилили баба ми, след което я убили. Съседите се погрижили за баща ми и го взели със себе си когато избягали в Северна България. Едно семейство, разбирайки за тежката му участ, го съжалява, осиновява го и се грижи за него като за роден син”.

“Съжалявам, не съм сигурна, че тази история е интересна за вас, но аз мисля, че историята на семейството е много важна за живота на човек и като индивидуалност.

Младежки години

“Живеех в Бургас заедно със семейството си – двама братя и една

сестра. Когато бях 23 годишна срещнах бъдещия си съпруг. Той беше войник в града. Това беше любов от пръв поглед. Виждахме се три пъти, след което той се върна в родния си град. В продължение на три години си писахме писма и когато разбрахме, че не можем да живеем един без друг решихме да се оженим. И това беше един от най-трудните моменти в моя живот – родителите ми не бяха съгласни. Семейството му беше бедно и не можеше да ми осигури добър живот (по думите на родителите ми).”

Настояще

“Когато пристигнах в родното място на моят съпруг, започнах работа като учител в едно от училищата тук. Седем години по-късно станах директор на училището и така до момента, в който се пенсионирах. Но това не беше край, а ново начало в моят живот. Започнах работа с деца от малцинствени групи, които имат проблеми с умственото развитие и социалната адаптация. Около 20 години работих с тези деца и това беше истинско удоволствие за мен. Помагам за тяхното социално включване. В момента седем от тях завършиха университет, а 5 други започнаха свой успешен бизнес.

“Заради здравословните ми проблеми сега работя само с едно 9 годишно дете, което не може да чете и пише. Сигурна съм, че ще успее да ми помогна и ще направя всичко по силите си.»

“Много съм горда с децата си – те са най-важната част от моят живот. Заено със съпруга ми – моят най-добър приятел”.

Self-portrait

Vera Daskalova, born 1946

Vera Daskalova was born in the village of Sitovo, Plovdiv region on March 23, 1920. Since 1941 she lives in the city of Plovdiv. She is registered in the Bulgarian Guinness Book of Records as the oldest volunteer in Bulgaria. She enjoys good health and has many friends.

She was married and has one daughter.



Early years

Life difficulties

She was very young when she lost her husband and this made her even more relentless in coping with life's difficulties and care for her only daughter. She found the meaning of her life in ensuring a good education and better future for her daughter. In the beginning of her career she worked as a cook in the kitchen of the Medical University of Plovdiv. Over time, however, she decided to improve her qualification and to extend the scope of her activities. After further training in Sofia she qualified as a dietary nutrition instructor.

Present

In 1978 she retired. She has been a volunteer with the Regional Council of Bulgarian Red Cross in Plovdiv since 1958. She actively participates in many of the activities of this regional organization and now she is one of the volunteer veterans in Plovdiv. She feels best when she is helping children deprived of parental care, children who never felt the support and affection of their parents. Vera takes great satisfaction out of the meetings with these kids, because she is able to transfer her experience, knowledge, cooking skills.

"Working at the Bulgarian Red Cross brings me a lot of excitement and satisfaction. I cannot imagine my life without this organization, which is not just where I give my voluntary work, but also where I receive a lot of attention and respect."

Self-portrait

Вера Славова Даскалова, Родена 1931

Вера Даскалова е родена в с. Ситово, Пловдивска област на 23 март 1920 година. От 1941 г. живее в гр. Пловдив. Включена е в българските рекорди на Гинес като най-възрастната доброволка в България. Радва се на добро здраве и много приятели. Омъжена е и има една дъщеря.



Младостта и Житейски трудности

Съвсем млада загубила съпруга си и това я направило още по-борбена да се справя с житейските трудности и грижата за единствената и дъщеря. Ежедневието и смисъла на живота и се изразявало в това да осигури образованието и добро бъдеще за дъщеря си. В начало на трудовата си кариера работила като готвач в кухнята на Висшия медицински институт в град Пловдив. С течение на времето обаче решава, че трябва да повиши квалификацията си и да разшири предмета на своята дейност. След допълнително обучение в гр. София получава квалификация за инструктор по диетично хранене.

Настояще

От 1978 година е пенсионерка. Доброволка е към Областния съвет на БЧК Пловдив от 1958 година. Включва се активно в голяма част от дейностите на областната организация. Сега е сред ветераните на доброволците в Пловдив. Най-добре се чувства когато помага на деца, които са лишени от родителска грижа. Деца, които никога не са чувствали подкрепата и обичта на своите родители. Вера споделя, че се чувства наистина удовлетворена от срещите си с тези деца, защото би могла да им предаде своя опит, знания, готварските си умения.

“Работата в Български Червен кръст ми носи много вълнения и удовлетворение. Не мога да си представя живота си без тази организация, където помагам не само с доброволния си труд, а намирам много внимание и уважение.” *Self-portrait*

Erika Bucholtz, born 1918

Childhood

Erika Bucholtz was born in Kharkov, Russia, as the eldest of three sisters. Her father was a Baltic-German merchant. During the prosecution at the time of the Russian Revolution, the family moved to London and later to Helsinki, and finally back to Riga, Latvia, the home country of a German minority. There she completed her secondary education. In the German school she learned Latvian, Russian and English. During further studies in Lausanne, Switzerland and in England, she completed her foreign language skills.



Repatriation

The Non-aggression Pact between Hitler and Stalin changed her life dramatically. The German minority was expelled from the Baltic countries and re-settled in the German-occupied Poland. In Poznan, the family found a temporary new home. There, Erika had the opportunity to attend the conservatory where she received training to become a pianist. Soon she fell in love with her German family doctor from Estonia, and in 1941 the couple were married. Their two children were born in 1942 and 1944.

Escape

As the Russian front approached, her husband was drafted as a soldier and the women and children fled to the West. After two grueling years, the young family was reunited after the war in Göppingen, near Stuttgart, where they lived for a long time in a barrack under pitiful conditions. Erika's husband finally found a job as a physician in the hospital of Dillingen, and later he had his own practice in a little village. A future perspective came when they could open a practice in Senden. Tragically, Dr. Bucholtz suffered a major stroke after which he lived only for a few more years. Pension was not yet available.

Since Erika had training in a commercial school, she was able to work as a secretary. First she worked for the Board of Education, where she was granted municipal lodging in the city of Ulm. Later, until her retirement, she worked in different offices at the University of Ulm.

Life in retirement

At the age of sixty, the new freedom in retirement encouraged her spirit of enterprise. In the newspaper of the Baltic Country Team for which she volunteered, she found an advertisement from a former fellow countryman who was looking for a conversation partner. Her reply led to a ten-year lasting friendship. For the first time she enjoyed partnership holidays to Austria, Italy and other European countries.



Activities in retirement

Most of her German-Latvian relatives had emigrated to America. She visited them one by one, during eight trips to the USA. Sometimes she also took care for her little grandchildren. Nevertheless, the passionate pianist never neglected her musical abilities. She accompanied a solo singer at performances and founded a singing group with some music-loving seniors. At the

adult education center she attended lectures frequently and refreshed her knowledge of Russian in conversation groups.

With former colleagues, she organized regular meetings in various cafés and maintained long-lasting contacts. “Now, all of them have passed away,” she said sadly.

Activities in seniors residence

Living on the 3rd floor of a post-war apartment, her living conditions became unfavorable. In the late 1990’s she considered moving to a retirement home. Since Ulm was not affordable for her, she moved to a nice 2-room apartment with a balcony in a retirement home in Memmingen, a little town 40 km from Ulm, at the age of 80. She could even take her piano and some of her cherished memorabilia to her new home. In the seniors’ residence she quickly found company with some of her housemates. They had discussions and music afternoons and undertook excursions to the city or the surrounding area.

Unfortunately, she suffered serious illnesses and was hospitalized for a long time. After a few years, she had to move to a nearby nursing home.

Nursing Home Activities

Now in her 94th year she has recovered amazingly well, although her eyes have weakened and she needs support for walking. Leaning on a walker she can still visit her friends in the neighbourhood. She travels with her little electric car to visit her doctor, and come to shops, restaurants and cafés. Her courage has not gone away. She looks into the future with optimism. As long as she is still alive, she likes to participate in all the interesting and current events. She is well informed of the development of today’s young generation through her long-distance telephone conversations with her grandchildren. She follows politics and current affairs on television and in the newspapers with the help of a magnifying glass. “I always had the great opportunity and the special gift to meet interesting people,” she says with bright eyes at the end of our conversation.

Interviewed by Brigitte Nguyen-Duong

Erika Bucholtz, geboren 1918

Kindheit

Frau Bucholtz wurde im russischen Charkow geboren, als älteste von drei Töchtern einer baltendeutschen Kaufmannsfamilie. Während der Verfolgung zur Zeit der russischen Revolution flüchtete die Familie nach London, später nach Helsinki und schließlich zurück ins Heimatland der deutschsprachigen Minderheit in Lettland, nach Riga. Dort absolvierte sie ihre ganze Schulzeit bis zum Abitur. Im deutschen Gymnasium lernte sie lettisch, russisch und englisch.



Durch Aufenthalte in Lausanne und in England vervollständigte sie ihre Fremdsprachenkenntnisse.

Umsiedlung

Der Nichtangriffspakt zwischen Hitler und Stalin änderte ihr Leben dramatisch. Die deutsche Minderheit wurde aus den baltischen Ländern ins deutsch besetzte Polen umgesiedelt. In Posen fand die Familie vorübergehend eine neue Bleibe. Erika hatte dort Gelegenheit, das Konservatorium zu besuchen, um sich als Pianistin ausbilden zu lassen. Bald entwickelte sich eine Zuneigung zu ihrem Hausarzt, einem Deutschen aus Estland, und 1941 heiratete das Paar. Zwei Kinder kamen 1942 und 1944 zur Welt.

Flucht

Als die russische Front näher kam, wurde der Vater als Soldat eingezogen und die Frauen und Kinder flüchteten Richtung Westen. Nach zwei entbehrungsreichen Jahren fand die junge Familie nach dem Krieg in Göppingen in Schwaben wieder zusammen. Jedoch lebten sie dort noch längere Zeit unter erbärmlichen Verhältnissen in einer Baracke. Der Vater fand schließlich eine Stelle im Dillinger Krankenhaus und später als praktizierender Landarzt in einem kleinen Dorf. Eine Zukunftsperspektive ergab sich erst, als in Senden eine Praxis eröffnet werden konnte. Tragischerweise erlitt Dr. Bucholtz nach kurzer Zeit einen schweren Schlaganfall und lebte als Pflegepatient nur noch wenige Jahre. Rente und Altersvorsorge waren so gut wie

keine vorhanden. Erika besann sich auf ihre frühere Ausbildung in einer Handelsschule und fand eine Stelle als Sekretärin, zunächst beim Staatl. Schulamt, von dem sie eine Dienstwohnung für sich und ihre Kinder mitten in Ulm zugeteilt bekam. Später arbeitete sie bis zu ihrer Pensionierung in verschiedenen Sekretariaten der Universität Ulm.

Leben im Ruhestand

Die neu gewonnene Freiheit im Ruhestand spornte ihren Unternehmungsgeist an. In der Zeitung der baltischen Landsmannschaft, bei der sie ehrenamtlich tätig war, fand sie die Anzeige eines ehemaligen Landesgenossen, der Gesprächspartner suchte. Ihr Antwortschreiben entwickelte sich zu einer 10-jährigen Freundschaft. Zum ersten Mal erlebte und genoss sie partnerschaftliche Urlaubsreisen nach Österreich und Italien und in andere europäische Länder.

Aktivitäten im Ruhestand

Die meisten ihrer baltendeutschen Verwandten waren nach Amerika ausgewandert, die sie der Reihe nach auf acht ausgedehnten Reisen in die USA besuchte. Auch um die inzwischen heranwachsenden Enkelkinder kümmerte sie sich intensiv, da ihr Sohn und die Schwiegertochter berufstätig waren. Dabei vernachlässigte die leidenschaftliche Pianistin nie ihre musikalische Ausbildung. Sie begleitete eine Solosängerin bei Auftritten und gründete eine Singgruppe mit musikbegeisterten Seniorinnen. In der Volkshochschule war sie häufig Hörerin von Vorträgen oder frischte in Konversationsgruppen ihre Russischkenntnisse auf.

Mit ehemaligen Kolleginnen organisierte sie regelmäßige Treffen in verschiedenen Cafés und pflegte lang andauernde Kontakte. „Jetzt lebt keine mehr von ihnen“, bemerkte sie traurig.

Seniorenheim und Aktivitäten

Ihre inzwischen ungünstigen Wohnverhältnisse im 3. Stock einer Nachkriegswohnung ließen sie Ende der 90er Jahre an einen Umzug in ein Seniorenheim denken. In Ulm fand sie keines zu einem für sie erschwing-

lichen Preis. Also zog sie mit 80 Jahren nach Memmingen in eine hübsche 2-Zimmer-Wohnung mit Balkon einer Seniorenresidenz. Sogar das Klavier konnte sie mitnehmen und einige ihr lieb gewordene Erinnerungsstücke. Im Haus fand sie schnell Anschluss an einige gleichgesinnte Mitbewohnerinnen. Gesprächsrunden und Musizernachmittage ergaben sich, sowie gemeinsame Ausflüge in die Stadt oder Umgebung.

Leider erlitt sie immer wieder ernsthafte Krankheiten mit längeren Klinikaufenthalten. Nach 10 Jahren ließ sich eine Übersiedlung ins Pflegeheim nicht umgehen.

Pflegeheim und Aktivitäten

Im nun 94. Lebensjahr hat sie sich wieder erstaunlich gut erholt. Ihre Augen haben zwar schwer an Sehkraft eingebüßt und die Beine schmerzen, so dass sie jetzt Gehhilfen benötigt. Gestützt auf einen Rollator besucht sie weiterhin ihre Freundinnen und Bekannten in der Nachbarschaft. Zu Besorgungen im nahen Stadtzentrum, Arztbesuchen oder Verabredungen in Cafés oder Restaurants fährt sie mit einem eigenen Elektromobil, das sie in der Tiefgarage am Akku geparkt hat. Ihr Lebensmut hat nicht abgenommen. Die Zukunft sieht sie optimistisch. Solange sie noch lebt, möchte sie an allen interessanten und aktuellen Geschehnissen teilhaben. Die Entwicklung der heutigen jungen Generation erfährt sie in langen Telefonaten von den Enkelkindern. Zeitgeschehen verfolgt sie im Fernsehen und in Zeitungen mit Hilfe eines Vergrößerungs-Leseapparats. „Ich habe das große Glück und die Gabe, immer interessante Menschen zu treffen“, bekennt sie strahlend zum Abschluss unseres Gesprächs.

Interviewed by Brigitte Nguyen-Duong, Juni 2011

Erna Subklew, born 1923

Family and education

Erna was born in Hindenburg, Upper Silesia, which is present day Poland. Her father was employed abroad. He had his family living in Istanbul from 1930 to 1940. Erna's education in the German School of Istanbul is the reason for her excellent knowledge of the Turkish language.



The Second World War forced the family to return to Germany. Erna finished her schooling with A-Level. Before studying pedagogy, she was obliged to spend a year working in a labor service. As soon as she finished her studies, she got married.

When the Russian Army was approaching in early 1945, the family escaped to Austria. But at the end of the war, all Germans were expelled. In a small village near the GDR (German Democratic Republic) border, Erna's family found a new home. Unfortunately, this place was to become a training area for the American Army; so once again they had to move. Meanwhile Rudolf Subklew, Erna's husband, was hired for a job in Frankfurt-on-the-Main. His young family joined him. By the end of the 1950's, the family had four children.

Active teaching

Germany was in need of teachers in 1969. Erna applied for a position and was accepted, in part because of her knowledge of the Turkish language. In order to be permanently appointed as a civil servant, she had to pass another exam. Meanwhile her daughter also had finished studies in pedagogy, so both ladies received their final diploma at the same time.

Mother Erna continued teaching in a primary school for twelve years. Children with a Turkish background naturally profited from their teacher, Mrs. Subklew, being able to help them in learning German. She could give them hints using their native language.



In a teacher's training college, Erna established courses for Turkish teachers not knowing the German teaching methods and didactics. She even developed teaching materials. The German school administration also profited from Erna's dual language and country competence.

Retirement

The new leisure time Erna used for her own studies. She enrolled for adult pedagogy, European ethnology and Turkology at the University of Frankfurt. After she had finished her studies with an M.A. degree, she continued studying and earned her doctor's degree.

The next step in her active retirement was to work with children before they entered primary school. It had been shown that children with foreign backgrounds often had heavy difficulties in handling the German language during their first years at school. For these children, Erna had a deep feeling since she had learned about their difficulties during her own teaching.

Further engagement

During her studies at university, Erna had been in contact with computer work and she was very interested in deeper knowledge. This led her to further education at the University of Ulm. Here a center for older students of computer science had been established with contact to ZAWiW, the center for scientific working for older students. A new world had been opened. The virtual network offered the possibility to maintain contact with co-students in spite of local distances.

When the association ViLE, the virtual network for older students, was founded in Berlin in 2002, Erna was present. She belonged to the initiators. She became a editor for the online-journal, LernCafé. Today she is still one of the authors who contribute interesting articles in the quarterly editions. (www.lerncafe.de). This journal has received many honors, the latest in 2011 for: „Deutschland – Land der Ideen“.

In Erna's Frankfurt home, she has created a real and a virtual literary club. The members meet with each other; while people who are not residents, can participate by net. The students choose books of general interest to be read and discussed. Their contributions are put online on a virtual platform so everybody can join in the discussion. It is called „Gemeinsam Lesen“, reading together.

Final reflections

Reflecting on her life, Erna thinks that her continued learning and studying and her curiosity for new challenges have made her life rich and gifted. She has learned the way to be happy and gratified. In the future she will continue learning and doing research work as she still has many ideas.

Interviewed by Erdmute Dietmann-Beckert

Erna Subklew, geboren 1923

Familie und Ausbildung

Erna wurde am 10. Juni 1923 in Hindenburg, Oberschlesien geboren. Ihr Vater arbeitete sehr häufig als Ingenieur im Ausland. Deshalb lebte die Familie von 1930 bis 1940 in Istanbul.



In der Deutschen Schule in Istanbul verbrachte Erna ihre Schulzeit bis ein Jahr vor dem Abitur. Ein Teil der Fächer wurde in türkischer Sprache unterrichtet. Der Krieg zwang die Familie, nach Schlesien zurückzukehren. In Hindelang legte Erna noch 1940 das Abitur ab und begann nach dem Arbeitsdienst, Pädagogik für Lehramt zu studieren. Nach der Ersten Staatsprüfung heiratete sie.

Anfang 1945 musste die Familie vor den Russen fliehen. Der erste Aufenthalt war in Bad Schallerbach in Oberösterreich. Dort fand sich auch nach und nach die Familie wieder zusammen. Nach Kriegsende mussten alle Reichsdeutschen Österreich verlassen. Ernas Familie wurde nach Bayern evakuiert. In Wildflecken, an der Grenze zur DDR, fand die junge Familie in dem Dorf Werberg ein neues Zuhause. Die Amerikaner nahmen das Gebiet weiter als Truppenübungsplatz in Anspruch, deshalb sollte das Dorf geschleift und die Bewohner ausgesiedelt werden. Für die Familie Subklew bedeutete es ein neuer Ortswechsel.

Rudolf Subklew fand in Frankfurt am Main 1953 eine Anstellung bei einer Landesbehörde. Bis Ende der 1950er Jahre hatte die Familie vier Kinder.

Lehrtätigkeit

Als 1969 das Land Hessen mehr Lehrer brauchte, bewarb sich Erna für den Schuldienst. Da sie die türkische Sprache beherrschte, wurde sie eingestellt. Für die Zweite Staatsprüfung ging sie noch einmal in das Referendariat. Sie beendete es, als ihre Tochter vor der Ersten Staatsprüfung stand. Diese hatte inzwischen ebenfalls Pädagogik studiert.

Mit der Zweiten Staatsprüfung wurde Erna als Beamtin übernommen. Sie unterrichtete zwölf Jahre lang an einer Grundschule. Die türkisch-stämmigen Kinder profitierten von Ernas Sprachkompetenz.

Danach baute Erna Subklew die Fachberatung für türkische Lehrer, Schüler und Eltern beim Hessischen Kultusministerium auf. Am Institut für Lehrerfortbildung unterrichtete sie türkische Lehrer und Lehrerinnen in Didaktik und Methodik für den Unterricht an deutschen Schulen. Für jene entwickelte sie Unterrichtsmaterialien. Auch die Schulverwaltung profitierte von Ernas türkischen Sprachkenntnissen. Darüber hinaus konnte sie zum besseren Verständnis der türkischen Kinder beitragen.

Ruhestand

Die neue Freizeit wollte Erna für ihre eigenen Studien nutzen. Sie immatrikulierte sich an der Universität Frankfurt am Main in den Fächern Erwachsenenpädagogik, Europäische Ethnologie und Turkologie. Nach sechs Semestern beendete sie das Studium mit dem Magister für Anthropologie und Europäische Ethnologie. Für die Promotion hingte sie noch einige Semester an.

Eine weitere Station in Ernas aktivem Ruhestand war die Arbeit mit den Vorschulkindern in den Kitas (Kindertagesstätten). Es hatte sich herausgestellt, dass Kinder mit ausländischem Hintergrund gehäuft Probleme mit der deutschen Sprache hatten, wenn sie in die Schule kamen. Diese Kinder lagen Erna besonders am Herzen, weil sie deren Probleme aus eigener Erfahrung in der Grundschule kannte.

Andere Aktivitäten

Schon während ihres Studiums gelangt sie in Verbindung zum Zentrum für Allgemeine Wissenschaftliche Weiterbildung der Universität Ulm (ZAWiW), einem Institut für wissenschaftliche Weiterbildung für ältere Erwachsene. Ein neues Tätigkeitsfeld eröffnete sich für sie. Das virtuelle Netzwerk bot die Möglichkeit, auch über größere örtliche Entfernungen hinweg mit anderen älteren Studierenden Kontakt aufzunehmen und sich auszutauschen. Als 2002 in Berlin der Verein ViLE (Virtuelles und Reales Lern- und Kompetenz-

Netzwerk älterer Erwachsener) gegründet wurde, war sie mit dabei. Die bereits beim ZAWiW bestehenden virtuellen Arbeitskreise kamen unter das Dach des neuen Vereins. Erna wurde verantwortliche Mitredakteurin des Online-Journals „LernCafé“ (www.lerncafe.de). Bis heute schreibt sie regelmäßig Artikel zu den Themen, unter denen vierteljährlich die Ausgaben erscheinen. Das LernCafé ist inzwischen mehrfach ausgezeichnet worden, zuletzt 2011 von der Initiative „Deutschland – Land der Ideen“.

In Frankfurt, wo Erna lebt, gründete sie im Rahmen des Vereins ViLE einen Literaturkreis. Die Teilnehmerinnen diskutieren über Bücher, die sie gemeinsam ausgewählt haben. Ihre Beiträge stellen sie über Internet in ein Diskussionsforum. Das bietet den Diskutierenden, die nicht am selben Ort wohnen, die Möglichkeit, sich einzuschalten und Kommentare abzugeben, nach dem Motto: „Gemeinsam Lesen“.

Schlussgedanken

Im Rückblick auf ihr Leben denkt Erna Subklew, dass sie durch die fortgesetzte Weiterbildung und ihre Neugier auf neue Herausforderungen sehr beschenkt wurde.

Mit ihrer Einstellung zum Lernen und Forschen hat sie für sich einen Weg gefunden, der sie erfüllt und zufrieden macht. Damit will sie auch in Zukunft nicht aufhören. Ideen hat sie genug.

Interview: Erdmute Dietmann-Beckert

Hermione Stiedl, born 1921

“Don’t roost like a hen awaiting the meals”

Hermione Stiedl is 91 years old and lives in a residential home for seniors in Vienna. Owing to macula degeneration she has largely lost her eyesight and she must use a walking frame. But during the interview we note that before us sits a woman with an active brain who speaks about her eventful life.



Herta: Where were you born, do you have brothers and sisters and who were your parents?

Hermione: I was born in 1921 in Vienna. I have no brothers and sisters, why not, I don’t know. My father was very thrifty at all times. He worked as a tramway employee. Later on he was an inspector under the “black party”, a synonym for the Christian Democratic Party in Austria. My father was never unemployed and we were never doing badly.” (This last statement referred to the years of massive unemployment in the 1930s.)

Herta: What was your profession?

Hermione: I was a qualified nurse for X-raying and physiotherapy.

Herta: You changed your religious denomination several times. How did that happen?

Hermione: Only after the war I became more interested in religion. During the war years I went down a bit as to morality: I had some relations with married men. But suddenly I found out that this was no orderly life and, in line with my impulsive character, I changed life completely by becoming a nun in the order of Carmelites in Gmunden (Austria). I was a good nun for 16 years. I worked a lot in the garden and in agriculture and was quite satisfied.

But one day my parents came to visit me and my father said: “We are old now, what will become of us?” I said spontaneously: “Papa, I will come

home to you". I prepared everything secretly, my father found a workplace for me in a hospital and I left the order.

Herta: I know that some time you also joined the Orthodox Church?

Hermione: I was very fond of the Russians (Soviet citizens), I also had a Russian friend. This was my motivation to go to the Orthodox.

But one day I heard the speech of a theologian lady – Uta Ranke-Heinemann. This speech gave me the impetus to change my life radically once again. She said: "You can pray to God, you can worship him, you can swear at him but you cannot eat God." Finally the problems I had with the Eucharist seemed to be solved. The word of God has become a book for me and this is the Koran. I started at once to learn Arabic (with 65 years). I visited a friend in Dubai who had married an Arab. There I converted to the Islam with everything which belongs to it.

I am now a "white raven" under. (She was distracted but we can imagine what she wanted to say)



Herta: How can you live your Muslim faith in a residential home?

Hermione: It is possible, I told them that I will not eat any pork meat and Muslim women usually are praying at home. I have everything in my room,

my CDs, a recorder with a clock that switches on at the times of prayer. I pray five times a day. I have no contact with the “Umma” the Muslim society in Austria. But I have also great sympathy for the Jews.

Herta: How do you spend your days?

Hermione: I am and always was an early riser. According to the seasons and to the position of the sun I get up at the automatic alarm call from the recorder clock. That is 6 o'clock in winter and in summer between two and three o'clock. Then I put on my liturgical robe – the Abaya – and switch on the CD for the prayer call. Afterwards I take breakfast and watch TV (I can only hear it). I have everything here, only the problem with the eyes is terrible for a bookworm like me. Now I have to content myself with audio books. Another problem is the walking frame which I need as support for walking.

Gerti: In spite of your 90 years you are so active mentally. Do you have an advice for us?

Hermione: We have a lot of entertainment here and the best nursing staff. On Wednesdays there is memory training.
“They take care that the old people don't roost like hens awaiting the meals.”

We see that Hermione gets tired from her reminiscences and we thank her for the interview.

*Interviewed by Herta Spitaler, Videokamera: Gerti Zupanich
Video clip: youtube ewavienna*

Hermione Stiedl, geboren 1921

„... nicht wie die Hühner auf der Stange sitzen und warten bis das Essen kommt ...“



Hermione ist 91 Jahre alt und lebt in einem Wohnheim für SeniorInnen in Wien. Durch eine Makulaerkrankung ist sie stark sehbehindert und benützt eine Gehhilfe. Doch während des Interviews merken wir, vor uns sitzt eine geistig sehr lebendige Frau, die uns aus ihrem bewegten Leben erzählt.

Herta: Wo sind sie geboren, haben Sie Geschwister und wer waren ihre Eltern?

Hermione: Ich bin 1921 in Wien geboren, Geschwister habe ich keine, warum weiß ich nicht. Vielleicht weil mein Vater sehr sparsam war (lacht). Der Vater war Straßenbahner, später Revisor unter den "Schwarzen". (Ein Synonym für die Christlich Demokratische Partei in Österreich). Auf die Frage wegen Arbeitslosigkeit in den 30er Jahren meint sie: Er – der Vater- war nie arbeitslos. Es ist uns nicht schlecht gegangen.

Herta: Was war Ihr Beruf?

Hermione: Ich war diplomierte Krankenschwester für Röntgen und physikalische Therapien.

Herta: Sie haben mehrere Male die Konfession gewechselt. Wie kam es dazu?

Hermione: Erst später, so nach dem Krieg, habe ich mich mehr mit Religion befasst. In den Kriegsjahren bin ich sittlich etwas abwärts gekommen, hatte mehrere „Pantscherln“ (Verhältnisse) mit verheirateten Männern. Ich habe plötzlich gefunden, das ist kein ordentliches Leben. Und energisch wie ich bin, bin ich gleich in Gmunden (Österreich) in den Karmeliterorden eingetreten. War 16 Jahre eine gute Nonne, habe viel im Garten und in der Landwirtschaft gearbeitet und war eigentlich ganz zufrieden.



Als mich eines Tages meine Eltern besuchten, hat mein Vater zu mir gesagt: „Wir sind jetzt alt, was wird aus uns werden?“ Spontan habe ich gesagt: „Papa, ich komme nach Hause!“ Heimlich habe ich alles vorbereitet, mein Vater hat mir einen Arbeitsplatz in einem Krankenhaus besorgt und ich bin aus dem Orden ausgetreten.

Herta: Sie waren doch auch einige Zeit bei der orthodoxen Kirche ...?“

Hermione: Ich war den Russen (Sowjetbürgern) sehr zugetan, hatte einen russischen Freund. Da lag es nahe, zu den Orthodoxen zu gehen. Aber eines Tages hörte ich einen Vortrag von der Theologin Ute Ranke-Heinemann. Das hat mir den Anstoß gegeben für eine radikale Änderung in meinem Leben. Sie sagte: „Zu Gott kann man beten, kann ihn verehren, man kann ihn beschimpfen, aber Gott kann man nicht essen!“

Endlich schien mein Eucharistieproblem gelöst zu sein! Gottes Wort ist für mich Buch geworden, das ist der Koran. Ich habe gleich Arabisch zu lernen begonnen. (Mit 65 Jahren). Habe meine Freundin in Dubai besucht, die mit einem Araber verheiratet ist. Dort bin ich konvertiert mit allem was dazu gehört.

So bin ich jetzt ein „weißer Rabe“ unter ...

(wurde abgelenkt, wir können uns das Fehlende denken).

Herta: Wie können Sie hier im Wohnheim Ihren muslimischen Glauben auch leben?

Hermione: Mit der Umma, der muslimischen Gemeinschaft in Wien, habe ich praktisch keinen Kontakt. Ich habe gesagt, ich esse kein Schweinefleisch, das geht hier. Frauen beten im Islam ohnehin zu Hause. Ich bete 5x am Tag, wie vorgeschrieben. Ich habe auch alles bei mir im Zimmer, meine CDs, einen Recorder mit Uhr, der die Gebetszeiten einschaltet. Ich habe auch große Sympathie für das Judentum.

Herta: Wie verbringen Sie den Alltag?

Hermione: Ich war und bin Frühaufsteherin. Je nach Jahreszeit und dem Stand der Sonne stehe ich mit dem automatischen Weckruf auf. Im Winter um sechs Uhr, im Sommer so zwischen zwei und drei Uhr. Dann ziehe ich mein liturgisches Gewand an – die Abaya – und schalte mir für den Gebetsruf die CDs ein. Dann Frühstück, Fernsehen (nur hören)...
(Frau Willie bringt ihr ein Glas Wasser, weil das lange Sprechen anstrengend ist)
Es fehlt mir hier an nichts, nur halt das mit dem Sehen ist schrecklich für eine Leseratte wie ich es bin. Und halt der Rollator, den brauche ich als Unterstützung beim Gehen.

Gerti: Sie sind so geistig aktiv, trotz Ihrer 90 Jahre. Gibt es einen Tipp für uns?

Hermione: Wir haben hier bestes Pflegepersonal, jede Menge Abwechslung – Mittwoch ist Gedächtnistraining. Es wird dafür gesorgt, dass die BewohnerInnen nicht wie die Hendln (Hühner) am Sprießl (Stange) sitzen und aufs Essen warten.

Wir merken, Frau Hermione wird von den Erinnerungen müde und bedanken uns für das Gespräch.

*Interviewed by Herta Spitaler, Videokamera: Gerti Zupanich
Video clip: auf youtube: ewavienna*

Lotte Freiberger, born 1923

"After 1945 we were beggars, had no flat, no clothing, no income", said Lotte Freiberger at the interview. Just off her entrance room there is a sign "Lotte Freiberger fashion parlor".

1923 born in Vienna, the father Jewish, the mother Christian, Lotte was a so-called "Validity Jewish" after the race laws of Nürnberg with the Jewish badge and all the constraints that were associated to that.



Charlotte: "Which memories do you have of your childhood and youth?"

Lotte F.: "My father was a wholesaler for silk and yarn, we were doing well until the National Socialists integrated Austria to the German Reich in 1938. From then on my father and I had to wear the Jewish badge with all the constraints that were associated to that.

Back then it was like that: if somebody was looking for a flat and you were known as being Jewish, one piece of information at the right place was enough and the legitimate owners had to move out. At our place in Meidling the janitor helped someone to get our place that way. Altogether we had to move six times between 1939 and 1945, not voluntarily. Furniture and all the other things got lost with the time. We got a room in the ninth district. I had to leave the school after the fifth grade and had to start fatigue duty and was not allowed to do my Master's exam in dress making. People who carried the Jewish badge were just allowed at the drafty platform of a tram. On some trams we were not allowed to ride at all. It was really humiliating. Three times the SS came to me and wanted to take me along."

Charlotte/Gerti: "And after 1945 how were you able to get back to a more or less "normal" life?"

Lotte F.: "In a sense we were lucky because we survived at least. The flat where I am living now, we obtained in 1945. I suffered of and I am still suffering of depression and fear. Back then my therapy was Aspirin which a doctor prescribed. Depression as an illness was not recognised back then. To survive I mended dresses, my salary was one litre of milk. I still was content, I did not have any milk for years. In 1945 I got the dispensation for the exami-

nation for the Master's certificate and opened a fashion parlor, of which you saw the sign outside. Later I got self employed with a commercial agency and worked here at home at this desk. I learned English myself which was necessary for this job..."

Gerti: "What did you do later, in the phase of life after work?"

Lotte F.: "When I was 57 years old, I went in early retirement. Through an acquaintance I got to know the "Documentary Archive of the Austrian Resistance" and that they needed people there for the reprocessing of the past. My reason to investigate there voluntarily, to find pieces of evidence and to order them was, and still is, that we contemporary witnesses have a certain obligation to keep everything for the posterity and pass it on. Otherwise everything gets lost. I worked there for 22 years."

Charlotte/Gerti: "Did the time at the DÖW help you personally to handle these difficult times better?"

Lotte F.: "No actually the opposite. Already in the beginning my emphasis was on the medical crimes of the NS and the euthanasia. It was difficult to bear how quickly children were sentenced to receive a deadly injection. Pursued by the NS was in this age everybody "inferior" such like Roma and homosexual people for example. During the National Socialist dictatorship nobody knew what happened and nobody asked when somebody disappeared. If there was any information it was only orally. And after the war nobody wanted to talk about it."

Gerti/Charlotte: "Today you are 88 years old, are very alert, the newspaper is on the table and you take part in political and daily events. How do you stay so active?"

Lotte F.: "I am kept alive through music, especially classical music. I read a lot, play solitaire and scrabbles, organize discussion rounds or cultural evening - the next topic will be Schnitzler - keep in contact with the young people from the documentary archive. We are still a family."

Interviewed by Charlotte Rastl and Gerti Zupanich

Lotte Freiberger, geboren 1923

„Wir waren nach 1945 Bettler, hatten keine Wohnung, keine Kleidung, keine Einkünfte“, erzählt uns Lotte Freiberger beim Interview. Gleich ihm Vorzimmer ein Schild „Lotte Freiberger Modesalon“.

1923 in Wien geboren, der Vater Jude, die Mutter Christin, Lotte nach den Nürnberger Rassengesetzen eine sogenannte „Geltungsjüdin“ mit Judenstern und allen Einschränkungen die damit verbunden waren.



Charlotte: „Welche Erinnerungen haben Sie an die Kinder- und Jugendjahre?“

Lotte F.: “Mein Vater war Großhändler mit Seiden und Garnen, uns ging es gut, bis 1938 die Nationalsozialisten Österreich ins Deutsche Reich eingliederten. Von da an mussten mein Vater und ich den Judenstern tragen, mit allen Beschränkungen, die damit verbunden waren.

Damals war das so: wenn wer eine Wohnung suchte und man war als Jude/Jüdin bekannt, genügte eine Information darüber an die “richtige” Stelle und schon mussten die rechtmäßigen Besitzer ausziehen. Bei uns in Meidling verhalf die Hausmeisterin auf diese Art jemand anderem zu unserer Wohnung. Insgesamt sind wir zwischen 1939 und 1945 sechsmal umgezogen, nicht freiwillig.

Möbel und alles andere ging nach und nach verloren. Wir bekamen ein Zimmer im 9. Bezirk zugewiesen. Ich musste nach der 5. Klasse die Schule verlassen, in den Arbeitsdienst eintreten, durfte keine Gesellen- oder Meisterprüfung als Schneiderin machen. Wer den Judenstern trug, konnte nur auf der zugigen Plattform der Straßenbahn mitfahren, auf einigen Bahnen gar nicht. Es war sehr erniedrigend. Drei Mal war die SS bei mir, wollten mich mitnehmen“.

Charlotte/Gerti: „Und nach 1945, wie konnten Sie wieder ein halbwegs „normales“ Leben beginnen und weiter führen?“

Lotte F.: „Wir hatten insofern Glück, dass wir wenigstens überlebt hatten. Diese Wohnung, wo ich jetzt noch lebe, bekamen wir 1945 zugewiesen.

Ich litt und leide noch an schweren Depressionen und Ängsten. Als Therapie gab mir damals mein Arzt Aspirin. Depressionen als Krankheit, das war noch nicht anerkannt. Um zu überleben habe ich Kleidungsstücke ausgebessert, Arbeitslohn 1 Liter Milch. Ich war dennoch zufrieden, Milch hatte ich schon jahrelang nicht mehr gehabt. 1945 bekam ich Dispens von der Meisterprüfung und eröffnete den Modesalon, wo Sie draußen dieses Schild gesehen haben. Später machte ich mich selbstständig mit einer Handelsagentur und arbeitete hier zu Hause an diesem Schreibtisch. Die notwendigen Englischkenntnisse eignete ich mir selbst an.“

Gerti: „Was haben Sie später, in der nachberuflichen Lebensphase gemacht?“

Lotte F.: „Mit 57 Jahren ging ich in Frühpension. Über eine Bekannte erfuhr ich vom „Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes“ (DÖW) und dass sie dort Leute zur Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit suchten. Mein Grund, dort ehrenamtlich zu recherchieren, Beweisstücke zu finden und zu ordnen, war und ist, dass wir ZeitzeugInnen eine gewisse Verpflichtung haben, alles der Nachwelt zu erhalten und weiterzugeben. Sonst geht alles verloren. Ich war dort 22 Jahre tätig“.

Charlotte/Gerti: „Hat Ihnen die Arbeit im DÖW geholfen die schweren Zeiten persönlich besser zu verarbeiten?“

Lotte F.: „Nein, es hat das Gegenteil bewirkt. Gleich zu Beginn lag mein Schwerpunkt bei den NS-Medizinverbrechen und der Euthanasie. Es ist schwer auszuhalten, wie schnell Kinder dazu verurteilt wurden, eine Todesspritze zu bekommen. Verfolgt wurde alles was als „minderwertig“ galt, wie z.B. Roma, Homosexuelle,...

Während der Nationalsozialistischen Diktatur haben wir alle nicht gewusst, was da geschieht, auch nicht nachgefragt, wenn Menschen verschwanden. Wenn überhaupt, gab es nur vage Informationen per Flüsterpropaganda. Und nach dem Krieg wollte niemand darüber reden.“

Gerti/Charlotte: „Sie sind heute 88 Jahre, sind geistig voll fit, die Tageszeitung liegt am Tisch, ein Zeichen Sie nehmen am politischen und gesellschaftlichen Geschehen Anteil. Wie bleibt man so aktiv?“

Lotte F.: „Mich erhielt und erhält die Musik am Leben, vor allem die klassische. Ich lese viel, lege Patiencen, spiele Scrabble, veranstalte Diskussionsrunden oder kulturelle Abende – der nächste wird „Schnitzler gewidmet sein - halte Kontakte zu den Jungen aus dem Archiv (Dokumentationsarchiv). Wir sind noch immer eine Familie.“

Interviewed Charlotte Rastl, Gerti Zupanich

EWA criterias for successful ageing (EN)

During the first project meeting in Bulgaria (Sofia, 7-9 October 2010), the participating groups decided that the goal was, besides surveying the life situations of older women, to find especially interesting women that could have a role model character for other women. This was followed by developing criteria for successful/fulfilled old ageing. After brainstorming and discussion of criteria, the results showed that several factors contribute to “successful” ageing, and these are physical and psychological situation, but also social and family environment, personal values and resources. Agreed criteria for successful ageing, adopted by the international Ewa group:

1. Physical situation

good physical condition, keeping the body move

2. Psychological/spiritual situation

acceptance of age, being able to reconcile with oneself, being content in old age, authenticity, charisma, internal motivation, optimism

3. Mental attitude

keeping spiritual balance, staying curious, wisdom

4. Social/family environment

active social position, being part of society, focus on family life, have courage to engage oneself where it is needed, meeting new people, social contacts, model role, no “power women”, take on responsibility for the weaker ones

5. Personal values

acting on one’s own decision, avoid violence, being able to let go, creating own opinions on social topics, getting old with dignity, kindness/goodness

6. Future views

dealing with the present to design the future, develop and foster personal talents, developing ideas and realize them, doing what one always wanted to do, finding a new focus for one's own life, keeping one's mind open for new challenges, be prepared for new things

7. Activities

civic engagement, developing what was started before, social engagement, staying active

8. Personal resources

being able to handle critical situations in old age: illness, loss, physical limitations, taking time for oneself, using own resources well

During the second project meeting in Czech Republic (Ceskè Budejovice, 11-14 April 2011) national results of interviews were presented and the participating groups discussed about common criteria to adopt as a guideline for future in-depth interviews, in order to identify two model role women for each national group. These are the final agreed criteria:

Awareness of problems in their own life
Consciousness of their way of life
Self-determination
Good management of problems
Reorganization of life after a turning point of crisis

Franca Batelli, EWA- coordinator Macomer

Practicing New Medias (EN)

During the two years of the EWA project, participants have had the great opportunity to practice the new IT in many different ways. To create the webpage www.european-women.eu was one of the most important jobs. The website was established in 2010 and maintained by the ZAWiW group from Ulm (Germany) all time during the project.

Today our internet page is well developed and every one can find the most important information about EWA: the project purposes and its participants: 7 organizations from 6 European countries, the photos of every member of each group (women in their 50ies) with short information about every person, information about international project meetings in Sofia, České Budějovice, Ferrara and Ulm, Power Point presentations, survey results, the EWA project flyer, training material, and most important – portraits and interviews of our heroines – women in their 70ies and +.

One can find 87 interviews, 24 video films and 3 audio files about European women in older age on <http://www.european-women.eu>, representing the most interesting and inspiring life stories, which have been created during the EWA project.

Creating the portraits a number of different new media and technical instruments have been used such as audio recorders, video cameras, photo cameras, digital techniques, video film montage and audio sound technologies, video effects and music, scanner and Photoshop. Many learners of the project used a video camera or an audio recorder for the first time in their lives, some used the Word program for the first time in their lives, several learned how to best present the nice photos.

All our meetings have been documented in the rich photo gallery of our internet page. <http://www.european-women.eu/> There one can see the most interesting and funny moments of the partner meetings. All groups learned a lot preparing the material for the web page: writing and editing interviews, translating them, selecting the best photos, preparing video and audio material, making CDs and DVDs, and uploading the video material on You tube. The project integrated applications of new media with tools such as Skype and Internet forums. Every organization informed the societies in their own

countries about the EWA project through their web pages in national languages as well:

KWEIC, Kaunas (Lithuania): www.muic.lt

Bulgarian Red Cross, Sofia (Bulgaria): www.redcross.bg

Centro Documentazione Donna, Ferrara (Italy): www.informadonna.fe.it

ZAWiW, Ulm (Germany): www.zawiw.de and

<http://www.forschendes-lernen.de/frauengeschichte/>

Unitre, Macomer (Italy): www.unitremacomer.it

VHS- Hernals, Vienna (Austria): www.vhs.at/vhs17_project.html

ZAWiW, Ulm (Germany) created a mailing list for the coordinators and a mailing list for the Ulm group, which helped communicate during the project very well.

Centro Documentazione Donna, Ferrara (Italy) created the facebook entry: <http://it-it.facebook.com/pages/EWA-Ferrara-Italy/166522933385303>.

Some organizations like Bulgarian Red Cross and Centro Documentazione Donna (Ferrara) organized courses for participants on new technologies (Internet, e-mail, social networks, Skype) and workshops with a team (VHS-Hernals, Vienna) about the technical handling of a videocamera.

Different internet translation tools have been used during the project since all interviews had to be translated from national languages – German, Bulgarian, Italian, Czech, and Lithuanian - into the English language.

The project results are represented in a DVD presentation, which was made by the new IT program prezi.com by Kaunas WEIC (Lithuania). It is a well developed, dynamic map of the EWA project (with moving pictures and videos) which can easily be projected on a big screen during conferences and seminars and also being watched personally on one's computer at home.

Vitalija Norviliene, Coordinator EWA-group Kaunas

Applied methodology of life stories exploration (EN)

Based on a biographic approach (freely structured interview) the project EWA has opened a path to recollections of events, life stages and turning points of European women of the 20th and 21st century. Open questions were used to identify certain life turning points of the interviewed women (life stages in periods of approximately 20 years) and their testimony and reminiscence of childhood, youth, personal and social experience (the 1st life stage), of lifestyle changes after marriage, creation of an own family, caring of children and own development, significant personal and social events of the era (the 2nd life stage), of adulthood and early old age, lifestyle in the retirement age, events characterising the era (the 3rd life stage) and of the seniorship and late old age, recent life (the 4th life stage). All this was collected in the records of the interviewers which covered the entire life of the questioned women. These records allowed capturing their life in its complexity or in selected life stages in accordance with era, place (country), current political, economic and social development and changes taking place in Europe.

All partner teams worked together on developing a joint questionnaire. Upon consideration and pilot investigation the EWA teams have chosen to use its complete or partial version. In case of attempting to accentuate certain life stages and eras, an individual assemblage of open questions and interviews has been developed. This was done by the interviewers, often during repeated visits of questioned women in their homes.

Based on the established trust it was not difficult to assess the degree of their personal satisfaction with lived life and define the criteria of successful ageing. Personal recollections woven into the life stories and destinies of these women have confirmed that there are “great” and “small” recollections. The great recollections built their destinies (war, gulag, post-war era, period of normalization, etc.), the small ones have given directions to their lives (professional, interest-based, self-development, active engagement in social and community activities). The testimonies of the interviewed women were further analyzed and among the obtained data regularity and structure have been sought and found.

The results of a pilot investigation were presented by the individual groups at the 3rd meeting of project EWA partner teams in České Budějovice (11. – 14.4.2011) and published on the project web page <http://european-women.eu>.

The results have confirmed that the correct qualitative methodology of life stories exploration had been selected, using the biographic approach and technique of freely structured interviews.

Practicing the interviewing skills with the interviewed women, virtual communication with partners, cooperation on the product creation (posters, book, DVD) and invested efforts on the final result have multiplied the “added value” of the project and will be used in the future as an example of good practice.

Prof. Dr. Jana Sembarova



Storytelling of one's own life (EN)

Modern memory and narration research has proven that our life history, which is composed by the individual of episodes and reminiscences, is a construction. „Through narrative we construct, reconstruct, in some way reinvent yesterday and tomorrow“ (Jerome Brunner). Each narration, each conjuration of a memory changes it (e.g. embellishes, dwindles, dramatizes) and its latest version is filled as „so and so“.

A human being's brain and psyche are not static. The brain is a dynamic, self-organizing system with an incredible neuronal plasticity and works along the lines of „use it or lose it“. New experiences are modules of an activation of resources. Starting from „it was like that“ the crucial point is the opening of a space of opportunities: „What if...“. A great deal of un-lived life (failure, losses, dead ends) is implicit in every published life (biographies, contemporary witnesses).

The Homo sapiens is a narrative animal.

Life stories organize past experiences and prospective possibilities which endow one's existence with meaning, explain inexplicable and transform indigestible phenomena. Stories establish identity and continuity between past, present and future. In this respect they are part of our resilience strategies, i.e. the ability to stay healthy in any situation, to integrate disease and to overcome crisis and obstacles despite adverse circumstances.

Turning points were particularly important in the life stories told by the interviewed women. The resource-oriented question was related to the question „How does one master aging, under which circumstances, and which experiences are essential to succeed?“ The imagination of future visions was also part of the interview in the form of wide-ranging questions. If a woman starts to take the initiative as the autonomous creator (author) of her life, all experiences of contingency (accidents, strokes of fate, life circumstances) will be understood as situations of opportunities of development and change despite the seeming predetermination (incontenency-experiences).

The summaries of the interviews at hand show that changes and departures to pursue a satisfactory and autonomous life are possible despite numerous, real restrictions while growing older.

An interview is a vivid meeting of the questioned person, the narrator, and the interviewer. Although the succession of questions was standardized,

there was still enough space for the individual progression of the dialogues which lasted for several hours. These dialogues casted a new light on some experiences. Resonance, the experience of an empathic, attentive listener, was a felicitous experience for the questioned women. Transforming silent, concentrated experience into words and images is the merit of the EWA project and encourages anyone who still faces the adventure of aging.

Dr. med. Pia Daniela Schmücker , Moderator EWA-group Ulm
Reference:

Jerome Brunner, in Pestalozzi-Bridel, Annette, "Titel Worte sind Silber - was ist Gold?"; Heilsame Geschichten entwickeln in Körper, Bild und Sprache; ein integratives psychotherapeutisches Konzept. Stuttgart, Klett-Cotta 2011, S.30

Impressions and experiences about EWA-project (EN)

Collected from our coordinators and participants

“The EWA project has been a great opportunity for us to have a glance at older European women’s lives, to understand how they reacted to social, educational and family difficulties in different countries. We met very special women who can act as a role model for other women thanks to their authenticity, wisdom, motivation and self-determination. They represent an example and a stimulus for us to look ahead, living an autonomous and active life as long as possible”.

“ ...We had an opportunity to reflect upon our own life and consider actions and choices as a woman. I could understand that personal values and resources, active civic engagement, social contacts, and optimism are crucial elements for successful ageing, whatever physical, financial, social and family situations there may be”.

(Italian participants from EWA-group Unitre Macomer and Franca Batelli, coordinator)

“The challenge to find “Role Models” for active ageing was big and the approach varied. We noticed that different basic conditions in European countries influence the whole life and the possibilities for active ageing. Both, family assistance and working for general social welfare, are considered a natural part for the elderly generation. Despite of this, most women are satisfied with the past of their lives and enjoy each and every day”. *(Gerti Zupanich, coordinator EWA-group VHS- Vienna)*

“The project has brought together vital, intelligent women and was an inspiring experience how to manage ageing in a good way. Notwithstanding the diversity of countries and organizations participating in the project, there was an immediate harmony in identifying the important things to do. In the different activities we were involved in, we had fun and learned a lot.

Many of the older women interviewed in Ferrara have confirmed the importance of remembrance of women who witnessed a crucial period in

the history of Italian democracy. The testimonials are valuable for understanding the anthropological change in our communities”.

(Gabriella Fabbri, coordinator EWA-group Ferrara)

„The Lithuanian group of the EWA project finds it very meaningful in participating in this international project. It is a great challenge to do the common work for us as organization together with other European partners. And also it was very important to participate in the international meetings, to be with many other women from Austria, Germany, Bulgaria, Czech Republic and Italy, to learn what does it mean to go ageing in different countries. As Liucija Paškevičienė said, one of our participants: “The friendship of the Czech women made a big impression on me, I shall remember the meeting in České Budějovice for the rest in my life.”

(Vitalija Norviliene, coordinator EWA-group Kaunas)

„I have been much impressed by the knowledge, the capacity and the personality of some of the participants. We were received very friendly at our meetings and we got the impression how life is in Sofia, Budjejovice and Ferrara. In my opinion the aims of this Grundtvig EWA project were fully reached: i.e. to increase the self-confidence of women, to learn tolerance and how to age in harmony and last but not least how to foster the sense of community in Europe.”

(Barbara Heinze, co-coordinator EWA-group Ulm)

“As a 29 years old woman, the EWA project gave me an opportunity to understand and to believe that women can be active in their life after 70 + years old. They can actively participate in the social, political, humanitarian and economic life of the society. They also can be active participants in a lot of activities, discussions and decision-making processes of problems of their concern, too. It was a really great experience for me as a coordinator and for the women, who participated in the EWA project.”

(Desislava Ilieva, coordinator EWA-group Sofia)

A beautiful project (EWA) based on biographical access (interviews, photo elicitation), opening the path to reminiscences of life events and turning points of lives of European women living in the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century. The choice of methods (structured interviews, training in interviewing skills, virtual communication, cooperation on product creation, international cooperation and efforts) multiplied the added value of the project and will be used in the future.

(Jana Šemberová, coordinator EWA-group České-Budějovice)

“In my opinion the EWA project is a further step, which helps European countries to grow together. As older persons from different European countries got to know each other in this project, as they exchanged their views and learned from each other, so the European countries should further grow together and become a unity.

I think that such projects fostered by the European Union are a good way to achieve this goal”.

(Herta Spitaler, participant of EWA-goup VHS-Vienna)

Impressions and experiences collected by Gerti Zupanich, EWA-group VHS-Vienna

Some reflections from the EWA-group Ulm

Ageing successfully has many faces, it involves financial security, a good social network, effective conquest of personal crises due to heavy strokes of fate, results of war and political changes, gaining self-confidence, experiencing the feeling of fulfillment in a self-determined life. The many short biographies here show how women 70 plus from six European countries live their old age.

Comparing the different curriculum vitae we see many similarities, even across borders: the cruel experience of wars and their consequences, missing financial and social security for women, missing possibilities and only few chances to complete training and exercise a profession.

In many biographies we hear from ruptures in the family, through illness or death, from massive traumata. In the short biographies printed here the focus is on overcoming such wounds. This doesn't mean that bad experiences are left out, repressed or glossed over. Nevertheless: how to overcome them was in the foreground.



EWA meeting in Ferrara

And the ways to overcome personal crises can be quite different: studies and promotion, responsible tasks in social fields like Hospize work or in the Church, cultural travels, arts and crafts, dancing and creativity, music, poetry and writing books. In the years of retirement nearly all women we asked showed a strong will to live

and take interest in life: They occupy themselves – according to their mentality and former experience - with things that make them content in getting old with confidence. They are very much aware of the present time.

The development of the questionnaire, the preparation, announcement and carrying out of interviews building up confidence and trust with the interviewed person, executing different interview techniques with one or two interviewers, the choice and evaluation of sound and film material, how to use personal data of the interviewed women, forming the interviews into precise and informing texts, and also the presentation and discussion of the interviews: all this was of utmost interest for the interviewers.

The partner groups documented the results of the interviews in different ways.

- Documentation of the questions and answers belonging to it
- Resume of the interviews
- Chronological presentation of a life story
- Portrait of a personality
- Developing criteria of successful ageing and presentation of this focus.

From the different forms of how the results were documented different aspects of overcoming old age in the countries taking part can be deduced, depending on their sociocultural background.

- In Bulgaria on account of social conditions women very often do honorary work already in their working phase.
- It is impressive that most women in Sardinia still have skills in traditional techniques and execute them with pleasure even at very old ages.
- The interviewed Italian women of Ferrara have different social backgrounds. During their life most of them attained communal or other responsible positions, in which they defended human rights in general or especially those for women and workers.
- Even in difficult political times Czech women tried to achieve good, mostly academic or artistic education.
- Similar was the situation of the interviewed women of Lithuania who also suffered from bad political times, but nearly all of them studied at universities or art academies.
- In Vienna the older interviewed women had to escape, to emigrate or they suffered humiliation under the NS Regime. They still have to cope with their past.

Often the interviewed women in Vienna engage themselves in help projects of the municipality or in the Third world.

- The Germans asked are also often socially engaged on a honorary post. They are content to have time for life long learning, travels and artistic-cultural occupations and to pass on their experience and competence of life.

As a rule the women in the countries taking part succeeded in building up personal freedom and to engage themselves socially or politically. The greatest involvement is for the own family. Typical for the interviewed women is that they have a rather big family. Only few of the women are not married or don't have children. The occupation after professional work and family phase are very often connected to the orientation of the organization to which the participants belong: political, artistic or social activities. The activities most mentioned by content older people are travelling and writing. Not quite so often sport activities are mentioned. Pieces of advice were given; often the appeal for the younger generation that young women should try to get a solid vocational training, independent from the wish to marry and build a family.

The courage, strength of character, stamina and confidence of the interviewed women is admirable. To meet them in a personal encounter was an enrichment and stimulation for the interviewers! May the insight in the life stories encourage even younger women to organize their life in an active way and try to endeavour a selfdestined life despite all obstacles that might come up.

The Ewa-project unites women of formerly hostile countries. We get insight in the personal destinies of women in our country, but also outside our borders. The great transnational cooperation of the seven partner groups during the various meetings and by using the various internet applications was a true enrichment for all involved in the project. We see our work and cooperation as a contribution to a peaceful cohabitation of the civil societies in a united Europe, that is aware of its common grounds, but also of its differences. Europe has to master common challenges, one of which is the demographic change.

It is in this respect, that the women interviewed in the course of this project are role models for managing old age consciously and actively. Ageing can be shaped to ones own contentedness, if only one condition prevails: the desire to actively age in a human and inspiring environment.

*EWA –group Ulm, Agathe Wende, Barbara Heinze, Brigitte Nguyen-Duong, Erdmute Dietmann-Beckert, Erla Spatz-Zöllner, Pia Schmücker, Carmen Stadelhofer
June 2012*

Description of the EWA-group Budovice

The EWA project team comprises of 12 women in the age of 55 years and older, all being graduates of the University of the Third Age (UTA) with experience in international partner projects (PHARE 2005, 2006; INTERREG 2007; E-LiLL (Learning in Later Life 2006-2008)). The team has been divided into two working groups according to the place of their activity. The České Budějovice team consists of Ivanka Ruidarová, Jaroslava Šulcová, Miloslava Kruchňová, Blanka Laudová, Jiřina Tampírová, Marie Řeháková. The Český Krumlov team consists of Františka Kopuncová, Jana Vorlová, Jarmila Hanáková, Alena Rezková, Dagmar Vondrovicová, Marie Mácová. The leader of the Czech team was Dr Jana Šemberová, translation and communication in English language was arranged by Simona Králíčková.



The topic (European Women in Older Age) based on biographic approach (interview, photo elicitation) has opened the path to recollections and memories of life events, stages and turning points, and offered realization that two types of memories exist: great and small. The great ones document destinies of people, the small ones directions of their lives. With the aim of the most accurate reconstruction of living reality the project team has collected life stories of women (13 of which were selected for the project presentation) describing in detail the era in which they lived and in which they are actively spending their active aging. The team's directed consultation for the project work, training of "interview management", repeated visits of the interviewed women, communication with partners, creation of project products (poster, book, DVD), international cooperation and extended efforts on the final results have multiplied the "added value" of the project and will be used in the future.

Prof. Dr. Jana Semperová, translation: Simona Králíčková.

Projektový tým EWA tvoří ženy ve věku 55 let a výše, absolventky Univerzity třetího věku (University of the Third Age, UTA), se zkušeností s mezinárodními partnerskými projekty (PHARE 2005, 2006; INTERREG 2007; E-LiLL (Learning in Later Life 2006-2008)). Tým byl rozdělen na dvě pracovní skupiny, podle místa působení jejich členek. Českobudějovickou pracovní skupinu tvořily: Ivanka Ruiderová, Jaroslava Šulcová, Miloslava Kruchňová, Blanka Laudová, Jiřina Tampírová, Marie Řeháková. Českokrumlovskou skupinu tvořily: Františka Kopuncová, Jana Vorlová, Jarmila Hanáková, Alena Rezková, Dagmar Vondrovicová, Marie Mácová. Vedoucí českého týmu byla Doc. Jana Šemberová, s překlady a komunikací v anglickém jazyce pomáhala Simona Králíčková. Téma (EWA) ukotvené v biografických přístupech (interview, photoelicitation)



otevřících cestu ke vzpomínkám na životní události, etapy a mezníky života, nabídl poznání, že existují dva druhy vzpomínek: vzpomínky velké a malé. Velké vzpomínky dokumentují osudy, malé udávají životu směr.

S cílem co nejuvěrnější rekonstrukce žité reality představil projektový tým životní příběhy žen, (13 z nich vybral k prezentaci projektu) a doby, v níž žily a v níž v současnosti prožívají své aktivní stáří.

Řízené konzultace k projektu, nácvik „vedení“interview, opakované návštěvy u dotazovaných žen, komunikace s partnery, tvorba produktů (postery, kniha, DVD), mezinárodní spolupráce a vynaložené úsilí na konečném výsledku znásobily „přidanou hodnotu“ projektu a budou dále využívány.

Prof. Dr. Jana Šemberová University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, translation: Simona Králíčková.

Description of the EWA-group Ferrara

The group of Ferrara is a very heterogeneous group: no matter what age, religion, skin color or different ideas ... what matters is, that we are women. Many women joined not only by common interests, but also by friendship. This feeling was strengthened during the hours spent working on the project and the meetings in different countries.

The starting point is Centro Documentazione Donna of Ferrara, a library devoted entirely to women. This centre organizes many things for women of the town: events, book presentations, threaded discussions, conferences, evening entertainment, charity events, courses. It has also organized, in collaboration with the Municipality of Ferrara, a course on PC and new technologies for women over fifty years. This was an important opportunity to involve women in the new project EWA. After exposing the EWA project, many women have strived to do interviews with friends, colleagues, etc... It has created a network of collaboration that has come as far as Trieste, which is over 250 km from Ferrara. We also have held meetings with several organizations in the city where it was possible to meet interesting women to be interviewed. The places chosen were Centro Documentazione Donna, Women's Union in Italy, Centre for Social Promotion "Il quadrifoglio", Centre for Social Promotion "Acquedotto", the Community Theater Group Pontelagoscuro (Ferrara), and the CGIL union retirees. Many people have worked on the project, more than we thought.

After collecting the interviews we held some meetings to read together. These were opportunities to get together and share life experiences of different women inside and outside the group. The entire group was impressed by the positive life experiences of many women, their love for life, their daily positivity, their active interest in new things.

The experiences reported in the interviews were a clear lesson for the whole group, for members of all ages, from younger to older without distinction. In addition to the work of collecting interviews, there were meetings of coordination of the project. These have proved to be not only "work" but also an experience of community and solidarity among women.

It was nice to see how women of different nationalities, age and sometimes language is understood each other with just a smile and have fun together without the boundaries created by differences. The group also realized that many women interviewed had stories similar to women from other countries, thus reducing the geographical limits and taking into account only the

“simplicities” because they are women, regardless of everything else. One of the most exciting moments for us was the meeting organized in Ferrara. It was nice to show to other groups the way we work, our people, our traditions, our food, our city, our women interviewed.



During the Ferrara meeting

The project was such a stimulus for the group that it plans to continue work after the end of the project. In fact the experience gained through the project EWA has motivated us to continue to create a website with bibliographic records of essays, novels, biographies in our library, dealing with the theme of ageing.

We hope that this continues and involves even more people to create an even larger group and raise awareness to women in older age, because ageing is not a disease but a stage of life that makes us more valuable. Age adds value to all the features we have from birth and evolve with time. This is what we understand by participating in this project.

Gabriela Fabbri, Coordinator EWA-group Ferrara

Descrizione del gruppo EWA di Ferrara

Il gruppo di Ferrara è un gruppo molto eterogeneo: ciò che importa non è l'età, o la religione, o il colore della pelle o idee contrastanti ... ciò che conta è che siamo donne. Molte donne, unite non solo da interessi comuni, ma anche da un sentimento di amicizia. Questo legame si è rafforzato anche durante le ore trascorse a lavorare sul progetto e negli incontri svoltisi nei diversi paesi partecipanti.

Il punto di partenza è stato ed è il Centro Documentazione Donna di Ferrara, una biblioteca interamente dedicata al genere femminile. La biblioteca è molto attiva e organizza molte attività per le donne della città: eventi, presentazioni di libri, discussioni, conferenze, serate di divertimento, eventi di beneficenza, corsi. Il Centro ha inoltre creato, in collaborazione con il Comune di Ferrara, un corso di computer e nuove tecnologie per le donne oltre i cinquanta anni. Questa è stata un'occasione importante per coinvolgere le donne nel nuovo progetto EWA. Dopo aver esposto il progetto EWA, molte donne si sono subito offerte di partecipare, proponendo di intervistare amiche, colleghe, conoscenti, etc... Si è venuta così a creare una rete di collaborazione che è giunta sino a Trieste, che dista da Ferrara più di 250 km. Abbiamo organizzato anche incontri con varie organizzazioni della città, nelle quali sarebbe stato possibile incontrare donne interessanti da poter intervistare. I luoghi scelti erano il Centro Documentazione Donna, Unione Donne in Italia, il Centro di Promozione Sociale "Il Quadrifoglio", il Centro di Promozione Sociale "Acquedotto", il Gruppo del Teatro Comunitario di Pontelagoscuro (Ferrara) e dei pensionati Cgil. Molte persone hanno lavorato sul progetto, più di quante potessimo pensare.

Dopo aver raccolto le interviste abbiamo tenuto alcuni incontri per leggerle e commentarle tutte insieme. Questi incontri si sono rivelati un'opportunità per condividere esperienze di vita di donne estranee al nostro gruppo. Tutte noi siamo rimaste colpite dalle esperienze di vita positive di molte donne, il loro amore per la vita, la loro positività quotidiana, il loro interesse attivo verso cose nuove.

Le esperienze riportate nelle interviste sono state una chiara lezione per tutto il gruppo, per le componenti di tutte le età, dalla più giovane alla meno giovane, senza distinzioni. Oltre al lavoro di raccolta di interviste, sono stati svolti anche incontri di coordinamento del progetto, ai quali partecipavano tutti i Paesi partners. Questi si sono dimostrati essere non solo incontri di lavoro, ma anche esperienza di comunità, di solidarietà tra donne. E 'stato

bello vedere come donne di diverse nazionalità, età e lingua si potessero capire anche solo con un sorriso, divertendosi insieme tralasciando i limiti creati dalle differenze. Ci si è anche rese conto che molte donne intervistate hanno storie simili a donne provenienti da altri Paesi, riducendo così i limiti geografici e tenendo in considerazione solo il "semplice" fatto di essere donne, tralasciando tutto il resto.

Uno dei momenti più emozionanti per noi è stato l'incontro organizzato a Ferrara. E 'stato bello mostrare agli altri gruppi il modo in cui lavoriamo, la nostra gente, le nostre tradizioni, il cibo, la nostra città, le nostre donne protagoniste.

Il progetto EWA è stato uno stimolo per il gruppo che ha intenzione di continuare a lavorare anche dopo il termine del progetto. Infatti l'esperienza acquisita attraverso il progetto EWA ci ha motivate a continuare a lavorare e creare un sito web con recensioni di saggi, romanzi, biografie presenti nella nostra biblioteca e non, che trattano il tema dell'invecchiamento positivo.

Speriamo che tutto questo possa prendere piede, coinvolgendo sempre più persone per creare un gruppo ancora più grande e sensibilizzare le donne in età avanzata, perché l'invecchiamento non è una malattia ma una fase della vita che ci rende tutte più preziose. L'età aggiunge valore a tutte le qualità che abbiamo sin dalla nascita e che si evolvono con il tempo.

Gabriela Fabbri, Coordinatrice EWA gruop di Ferrara

Description of the EWA-group Kaunas



*„As we grow older, we must discipline ourselves to continue expanding, broadening, learning, keeping our minds active and open“
(Clint Eastwood)*

”Becoming old starts from the soul, – Aldona Krištaponienė (age 77), one of our EWA project heroines, remarks, – I am happy that I am not old in my soul, I am singing, I am dancing, and I still can do fifteen push-ups”. The psychologist Arnold Mindell warns, “The danger of the old age is that it can happen... in any age”: one must deliberately resist it. It was a great challenge for the Lithuanian EWA group in Kaunas to find out the role models for active ageing. As many of our Kaunas group did an interview for the first time in their lives, it gave us absolutely new experiences. We found out that women in various European countries had to deal with different environmental conditions, many of them went through the war, Communist regime, exile and poor life conditions after the war.

We noticed that the most active and optimistic women still have interesting things to do – they sing, they dance, they travel, they take new challenges in their lives. Elvyda Morkūnaitė Čaplikienė (age 78) was already a pensioner when she opened the small bookshop for literature about the Lithuanian resistance against the Soviet invaders. When she was young, she was a prisoner in Krasnoyarsk, Siberia. But the difficult life conditions did not break her spirit, today she is full of energy and optimism.

Irena Dranseikienė (age 70) was a family woman. When at the age of 55 she lost her job, her life priorities changed: she found the meaning of her life in the

political activity in the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party. Now she is one of the most active women in the Kaunas section of this political party.

Ona Šeštakauskienė learned computer skills at the age of 84. With a camera in her hands she is traveling around the country, studying its history and geography. She returns home every time with the most beautiful photos from Lithuanian towns, villages, fiestas and festivals. Marija (age 73) was working as a scientist. At the age of 62, she went to the USA, was working hard as a simple nurse, traveled around the United States and saw a lot of the most interesting things, which inspired her for the rest of her life. Daina Bačianskienė (age 79) loves the calm and silent life in her native village, in a small wooden house near by Kaunas. A person does not need much. Her modest life style can be an example for everyone, who feels unhappy. “Don’t be depressed when hardship overtakes, because all that passes away,” – is the lady’s advice for younger generations.

Magdalena Stankūnienė-Stankūnė’s (age 85) is traveling from the USA to her homeland every year and is full of energy. Even living in America, her heart is here, in Lithuania. She returned to Marijampolė, her native town, and saw that there was no modern art gallery there. Magdalena said: “There will be a gallery”. After many talks with city’s municipality representatives, and after several attempts, her dream became true with the help of many people. The Art Gallery in Marijampolė opened its doors. When she needs a new car, she thinks, maybe the old one will still be good: it is much more interesting to do something useful with the money in her homeland.

Lithuania’s group at the Kaunas Women Employment Information Centre – Jadvyga Pliopaitė, Enrika Striogaitė, Liucija Paškevičienė, Dana Urbanaitė, Laimutė Bigenienė, Jūratė Puidienė, Virginija Valančienė, Raimunda Kosterinienė, Virginija Uždavinienė, Ilona Katiliūtė-Svartz, Irena Dranseikienė, Vitalija Norvilienė – think that the most important experience from the project is optimism, activity, good will for other people and wisdom one can take from the wonderful ladies age 70 and plus:

“I am satisfied about my life. My opinion is that it is better for one to enjoy the birds, but not to complain that oneself does not have wings. I live in what is real. I enjoy life. When I feel tired, I switch off the phone and go into the woods. My hobby is driving a car, this is a way I relax, visiting beautiful places,” – Irena Dranseikienė tells.

“My children wouldn’t let me to go so far from Chicago to Lithuania every year I

would have them. But now I am free to do what I think is important. I am happy, and I feel myself very well and I am in good health. I am thinking, God doesn't take me, because I still have something to do in this world ,“ – says Magdalena Birutė Stankūnienė-Stankūnė.

“Implementing life goals there is no such a thing like a lack of conditions, – says Vaillionytė (age 84). – Everyone creates conditions by oneself, there is nobody to blame. If one didn't achieve one's own objectives, it means that one didn't care enough about them. When I was young I attended a drama studio, I was talented. I played in a theater, participating in the mass scenes. But I quit the theater, because I wanted to study history. I went to Vilnius, finished the studies of history and became a teacher. I never regretted my choice”.

Rūta (age 70) changed her profession in her late years and became a teacher of the English language. She says: “A life includes a lot. Maybe you are satisfied with something, maybe not. On the whole, a person should be satisfied with those things that he/she has got, but a person should want a bit more.” She thinks, that one should have a few ideas to realize. For instance: you live alone in an old house. A very old house indeed. Are you satisfied? No, if you haven't any idea regarding the nearest future. Yes, if you have an idea to get a small amount of paint and paint some window sills. After your idea is accomplished, you feel yourself completely satisfied. And life agrees with you for some time. Until you find another idea for yourself. „I can see a lot of women that have ideas with their gardening, or sewing, or knitting, or painting. If there is something you would like to accomplish in the nearest future, then social changes do not overwhelm you. It does not matter if you are on the verge of old age or still young “.

Someone said that the old age is like a land mysterious and unknown, which we'll fail to understand as long as one day we'll enter it. Thanks to the project EWA, we entered a small step into the land unknown. During the two years of the project we became a little bit stronger and wiser. We are grateful for wonderful senior women in Lithuania, Italy, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Austria and Sardinia, whose life stories inspired us to see our own lives in a new, hopeful way.

Vitalija Norvilienė , EWA-group Kaunas

*“Žengdami į senatvę, turime nuteikti save, kad ir toliau vystysimės, plėsimės, mokysimės, palaikydami savo protus aktyvius ir atvirus “
(Clint Eastwood)*

„Senatvė prasideda nuo sielos, – sako Aldona Krištaponienė (77 m.), viena iš mūsų Ewa projekto dalyvių. – Esu laiminga, kad nepasenu savo siela, aš dainuoju, aš šoku ir penkiolika atsispaudimų vis dar galiu padaryti“. Psichologas Arnoldas Mindellis perspėja, kad „Senatvė pavojinga tuo, kad gali ištikti žmogų... bet kuriame amžiuje“, tad žmogus turi stengtis sąmoningai jai atsispirti. Buvo didelis iššūkis Lietuvos EWA Kauno grupei bandyti atrasti aktyviaus senėjimo pavyzdžių savo aplinkoje. Kadangi daugelis iš mūsų darėme interviu pirmąjį kartą savo gyvenime, ši patirtis mums davė visiškai naujų įspūdžių. Mes nustatėme, kad moterims įvairiose Europos šalyse teko susidurti su įvairiomis aplinkos sąlygomis, daugeliui teko išgyventi karą, komunistų režimą, tremtį ir skurdžias gyvenimo sąlygas po karo.

Pastebėjome, kad aktyviausios ir optimistišiausios moterys vis dar randa savo gyvenime įdomios veiklos – jos dainuoja, jos šoka, jos keliauja, jos imasi naujų iššūkių. Elvyda Morkūnaitė Čaplikienė (78 m.) buvo jau pensinio amžiaus, kai atidarė nedidelę literatūros apie Lietuvos pasipriešinimą Sovietiniams okupantams knygynėlį. Būdama jauna, ji iškentėjo tremtį Krasnojarske, Sibire. Tačiau sudėtingos gyvenimo sąlygos nepalaužė jos dvasios, šiandien ji yra pilna energijos ir optimizmo.

Irena Dranseikienė (70 m.) buvo šeimos moteris. Penkiasdešimt penkerių ji prarado savo darbą, iki savo septintojo dešimtmečio šios moters prioritetai pasikeitė: ji atrado savo gyvenimo prasmę Lietuvos socialdemokratų partijos politinėje veikloje. Dabar ji yra viena aktyviausių savo politinės partijos Kauno skyriaus veikėjų.

Ona Šeštakauskienė išmoko dirbti kompiuteriu būdama 84 amžiaus. Su foto kamera rankose, ji keliauja po šalį, studijuodama jos istoriją ir geografiją. Ji grįžta namo kiekvieną kartą su pluoštu gražiausių nuotraukų iš Lietuvos miestų, kaimų, švenčių ir festivalių. Marija (73 m.) dirbo kaip mokslininkė, sulauksi 62 metų, ji išvyko į JAV, dirbo sunkų paprastos slaugytojos darbą, keliavo po Jungtines Amerikos Valstijas ir pamatė daug įdomiausių dalykų, kurie įkvėpė ją visam likusiam gyvenimui. Dainai Bačianskienei (79 m.) patinka jos ramus ir tylus gyvenimas savo gimtajame kaime, nedideliame mediniame name netoli Kau-

no. Žmogui nereikia daug. Jos kuklus gyvenimo būdas galėtų būti pavyzdžiu visiems, kurie jaučiasi nelaimingi. „Neišsigąskite, kai užėina sunkumai jūsų gyvenime, nes viskas praeina...“, – pataria Daina jaunosios kartoms moterims. Magdalena Stankūnienė Stankūnė (85 m.) keliauja iš JAV į tėvynę kasmet ir yra pilna energijos. Nors ji gyvena Amerikoje, jos širdis yra čia, Lietuvoje. Ji grįžo į Marijampolę, savo gimtąjį miestą, ir pamatė, kad nėra jame nė vienos šiuolaikinio meno galerijos. Magdalena pasakė: „Bus Marijampolėje galerija“. Po daugelio pokalbių su miesto savivaldybės atstovais, daugybės bandymų ir padedant daugeliui žmonių, jos svajonė tapo realybe. Marijampolės dailės galerija atvėrė duris. Kai ateina laikas nusipirkti naują automobilį, ji galvoja, kad ir senas bus dar geras, daug įdomiau už tuos pinigus padaryti kažką naudingo tėvynėje.

Lietuvos grupė Kauno moterų užimtumo informacijos centre – Jadvyga Pliopaitė, Enrika Striogaitė, Liucija Paškevičienė, Dana Urbanaitė, Laimutė Bigenienė, Jūratė Puidienė, Virginija Valančienė, Raimunda Kosterinienė, Virginija Uždavinienė, Ilona Katiliūtė-Svartz, Irena Dranseikienė, Vitalija Norvilienė – mano, kad svarbiausia šio projekto patirtis yra optimizmas, aktyvumas, gera linkėjimas kitiems žmonėms ir išmintis, kurios galima pasisemti iš šių nuostabių 70 metų amžiaus (ir daugiau) ponių:

“Esu patenkinta savo gyvenimu. Mano nuomone geriau mėgautis paukščiais, o ne dejuoti, kad neturi sparnų. Gyvenu tuo, kas realu. Aš mėgaujuosi gyvenimu. Kai pasijuntu pavargusi, išjuniu telefoną ir iškeliauju į mišką. Mano hobis yra vairuoti automobilį, tai man būdas atsipalaiduoti, tada aplankau gražias vietas“, – pasakoja Irena Dranseikienė (70 m.).

“Turėčiau aš vaikų, neleistų man keliauti iš Čikagos taip toli kiekvienais metais. Bet dabar aš esu laisva daryti tai, kas man atrodo svarbu. Aš esu laiminga, ir jaučiuosi labai gerai, mano sveikata puiki. Manau, kad Dievas vis dar nenori manęs pasiimti, nes dar turiu, ką veikti šiame pasaulyje,” – sako 86-erių metų amžiaus Magdalena Birutė Stankūnienė-Stankūnė.

„Kalbant apie gyvenimo tikslus ir jų įgyvendinimą, manau, kad tokio dalyko, kaip sąlygų neturėjimas nebūna, – sako Danutė Vailionytė Vailionė (84 m.). – Sąlygas kiekvienas susikuria pats. Jeigu nepasiekėte to, apie ką svajojote, nereikia nieko kaltinti. Vadinasi nepakankamai jums tai rūpėjo. Aš jaunystėje lankiau dramos studiją, buvau gabi. Jau vaidinau tikrame teatre, masinėse scenose. Bet mečiau teatrą, nors mane labai kalbino tokios klaidos nedaryti, galėjau tapti aktore, bet aš norėjau studijuoti istoriją Vilniuje. Iš važiauvau į Vilnių, baigiau istorijos studi-

jas, tapau mokytoja. Ir nesigailiu savo pasirinkimo iki šiol.“

Rūta (70 m.) pastaraisiais metais pakeitė savo profesiją ir tapo anglų kalbos mokytoja. Ji sako: „Į gyvenimą įeina daug kas. Gali būti juo patenkintas arba galbūt ne. Tačiau galiausiai žmogus turėtų būti patenkintas tuo, ką turi, nors norėtų šiek tiek daugiau. Manau, kad kiekvienas turėtų turėti bent keletą idėjų, kurias norėtų įgyvendinti. Pavyzdžiui, jūs gyvenate viena sename name. Labai sename name iš tiesų. Ar jūs patenkinta? Ne, jeigu neturite idėjų dėl artimiausios ateities. Taip, jeigu turite mintį gauti kur nors nedidelį kiekį dažų ir nudažyti palanges. Kai jūsų idėja įgyvendinta, pajuntate didelį pasitenkinimą. Gyvenimas sutaria su jumis kuriam laikui. Kol randate sau naują idėją. Ir vėl viskas iš pradžių. Apie idėjas. Aš sutinku daug moterų, kurios turi minčių, kaip susitvarkyti sodą, ką nors pasisiūti, nusimegzti, nutapyti. Jeigu turite ką nors, ką norite įvykdyti artimiausioje ateityje, socialiniai pasikeitimai jums nebaisūs. Ir neturi reikšmės, esate sena ar jauna“.

Kažkas pasakė, kad senatvė yra kaip nežinoma ir paslaptinga žemė, kurios nesusirasime tol, kol vieną dieną patys nebūsime įvesti į ją. Projekto Ewa dėka, mes įžengėme mažą žingsnelį į šią nepažįstamą vietą, per dvejus projekto metus tapdamos šiek tiek stipresnėmis ir išmintingesnėmis, todėl esame dėkingos už nuostabias vyresnio amžiaus moterų Lietuvoje, Italijoje, Bulgarijoje, Čekijoje, Vokietijoje, Austrijoje ir Sardinijoje gyvenimo istorijas, kuriuos įkvėpė naujos vilties mūsų pačių gyvenimuose.

Vitalija Norvilienė, Kauno moters užimtumo in formacijos centras, Lietuva

Description of the EWA-group Macomer



The Unitre Macomer group joined the EWA project after an invitation from the coordinator of the German partner group. Thirteen members of Unitre participated in the EWA project, according to their previous experience and personal interest; they are Anna Marongiu (president of the association), Franca Battelli (project coordinator), Sara Deiola (our video and photo expert), Maria Agnese Molinas, Anna Rossini, Maria Luisa Murgia, Maria Luisa Mulas, Anna Marcia, Biagia Botta, Gianfranca Mingioni, Lella Cansella, Caterina Lostia, and Maria Teresa Gallus.

We always met in Unitre centre, in Macomer, to discuss and share objectives, strategies and decisions. We were really enthusiastic about the work to develop but, at the same time, we were conscious of the difficulties implied in the project and of our own limits, specially in communication with European partners using the English language and the internet. Consequently, special courses in informatics and English were organized for the participants.

The first problem we faced was the selection of older women (70 +) to interview, willing to collaborate and tell us their personal life story, so we prepared a first list with the help of older members of the association, friends and relatives. We found a real help during the first international meeting in Sofia, in October 2010, when common criteria for successful ageing were decided and we could finally identify 20 model role women. We discussed a lot about the interview questionnaire contents and structure and modified it several times, also according to the partners' suggestions. All women in our group were involved in the interviews, according to their personal will-

ingness, and we could present the first results during the second project meeting in České Budejovice, in April 2011.

But a hard work had to be done to complete the project and there were so many problems and obstacles: not all women accepted to be interviewed or answer to specific personal questions, some of them did not like photos, videos or recordings, so we had to meet them several times, to convince and assure them about the project aims, sometimes we had to change the names in our list. Moreover, only few members in our group were able to interview women properly using such technical supports like video and audio recorders. Instructions and training material on interviews technique, offered by VHS Vienna and ZAWIW Ulm partners, helped us greatly in this important step of the project.

Discussions about the final selection of 10 women for in-depth interviews involved us for a quite long time, finally we decided to meet and interview again 10 women meeting the greater number of EWA criteria, which had been our guideline in the project development.

At the end of the project we can say that it has been a really new and motivating experience, the long and hard work done coping with practical problems, sharing different opinions, organizing activities, allowed us to grow personally and as a group. We could learn a lot about different countries and realities, gaining a wider view on the importance of European cooperation.

Thanks to this project we could meet older women who have succeeded in taking full responsibility of their own lives, keeping an active role in society even with different social, economic, educational, and political conditions. Learning how we can lead an autonomous and active life as long as possible can help not only ourselves but also our communities and society as a whole. We are sure we'll keep this experience in our hearts, together with all the wonderful women in the other partner groups who friendly and spontaneously shared their values, competences and experiences with us.

Our final reflection is that elderly European women can play a powerful role in pulling down social, political, cultural, ethical stereotypes and barriers throughout Europe, strengthening mutual comprehension and cooperation both at a national and international level.

Franca Batelli, Coordinator of EWA Macomer

Descrizione del gruppo EWA di Macomer

Il gruppo dell'Unitre di Macomer, Sardegna, ha aderito al progetto EWA in seguito all'invito della coordinatrice del gruppo partner della Germania. Hanno partecipato al progetto 13 socie, indicate in base a precedenti esperienze e all'interesse personale; le socie sono Anna Marongiu (presidente dell'associazione), Franca Battelli (coordinatrice del progetto), Sara Deiola (la nostra esperta di video e foto), Maria Agnese Molinas, Anna Rossini, Maria Luisa Murgia, Maria Luisa Mulas, Anna Marcia, Biagia Botta, Gianfranca Mingioni, Lella Cansella, Caterina Lostia, Maria Teresa Gallus.

Ci siamo sempre incontrate nella sede dell'Unitre, a Macomer, per discutere e condividere obiettivi, strategie e decisioni. Eravamo molto entusiaste del lavoro da portare avanti ma, allo stesso tempo, consapevoli delle difficoltà inerenti il progetto e dei nostri limiti, specialmente riguardo l'uso della lingua inglese e di Internet per la comunicazione con i partner europei. Anche per tentare di superare questa difficoltà, sono stati organizzati corsi di lingua inglese e informatica per le partecipanti.

Il primo problema incontrato è stato decidere quali donne anziane (oltre i 70 anni) intervistare, che fossero disponibili a collaborare e raccontarci la storia della propria vita, così abbiamo deciso di preparare una prima lista con l'aiuto delle socie più anziane, di amiche e parenti. Abbiamo trovato un aiuto reale nel primo incontro internazionale a Sofia, nell'Ottobre 2010, quando sono stati decisi i criteri comuni per un invecchiamento di successo e abbiamo così identificato 20 donne di riferimento. Abbiamo discusso a lungo sui contenuti e sulla struttura del questionario di intervista, che è stato modificato varie volte, anche secondo con i suggerimenti dei partners. Tutte le donne del gruppo sono state coinvolte nelle interviste, secondo la loro disponibilità, e abbiamo potuto presentare i primi risultati nel secondo incontro internazionale a Ceské Budejovice, ad Aprile 2011.

Ma c'era ancora un difficile lavoro da svolgere per completare il progetto e tanti problemi ed ostacoli: non tutte le donne contattate erano disponibili ad essere intervistate o rispondere a specifiche domande personali, alcune di loro non gradivano essere fotografate, filmate o registrate, perciò abbiamo dovuto incontrarle varie volte per convincerle e rassicurarle sugli obiettivi del progetto, talvolta abbiamo dovuto cambiare i nomi nella nostra lista. Inoltre, solo alcune donne nel nostro gruppo conoscevano le tecniche di intervista ed erano capaci di utilizzare i supporti tecnici adeguati quali telecamera e registratore. Ci sono stati di grande aiuto in questa fase del progetto le is-

truzioni e i materiali informativi offerti dai partners di VHS Vienna e ZAWIW Ulm.

La discussione sulla selezione finale delle 10 donne per le interviste più approfondite ci ha impegnato abbastanza a lungo, infine si è deciso di incontrare ancora le 10 donne che rispondevano al maggior numero dei criteri EWA, criteri che avevano rappresentato le nostre linee guida nello sviluppo del progetto.

A conclusione del progetto possiamo dire che è stata un'esperienza davvero nuova e motivante, il lungo e difficile lavoro portato avanti tra difficoltà pratiche, condividendo opinioni diverse, organizzando le attività, ci ha permesso di crescere come persone e come gruppo. Abbiamo imparato molto su realtà e Paesi diversi, raggiungendo una visione più ampia dell'importanza della cooperazione europea.

Grazie a questo progetto abbiamo potuto incontrare donne più anziane che sono riuscite ad assumersi piena responsabilità della propria vita, mantenendo un ruolo attivo nella società anche in situazioni sociali, economiche, educative, politiche diverse. Imparare come poter condurre una vita autonoma e attiva il più a lungo possibile può aiutare non solo noi stesse ma anche le nostre comunità e la società nel suo insieme.

Siamo sicure che conserveremo questa esperienza nel nostro cuore, insieme alle donne meravigliose degli altri gruppi partner che con amicizia e spontaneità hanno condiviso con noi valori, competenze ed esperienze.

La nostra riflessione finale è che le donne europee più anziane possono svolgere un ruolo molto forte nell'abbattimento degli stereotipi e delle barriere sociali, politiche, culturali, etiche attraverso tutta l'Europa, rafforzando la mutua comprensione e collaborazione sia a livello nazionale che internazionale.

Franca Batelli, coordinatrice del gruppo EWA di Macomer

Description of the EWA-group Sofia



The EWA group at the Bulgarian Red Cross was created in 12 regions of Bulgaria – Montana, Plovdiv, Blagoevgrad, Lovech, Smolyan, Targovishte, Vratsa, Shumen, Dobrich, Russe, Gabrovo and Yambol. More than 200 women took part in the project activities and held regular monthly meetings in the local branches of BRC.

A computer course for basic knowledge was organized among the volunteers. They learned how to use Skype, Internet, Office programs, etc. The women of the third age collected the results from the questionnaires (98 questionnaires), hold interviews among themselves and discussed how to present the selected women.

The experience gained through the project EWA has motivated the volunteers to continue to work together and to increase their skills and knowledge for IT technologies, to know more about the life of the exceptional women who could be good examples for themselves and for the younger generations.

Desislava Ilieva, coordinator of the EWA-group in Sofia

Български Червен кръст въведе нов за България подход за работа с възрастни хора и направи представителите на третата възраст активни участници в живота на своите общности, както и в обсъждането и разрешаването на конкретни проблеми, които пряко ги засягат. В различните дейности на организацията се включват повече от 1200 доброволци, голяма част от които са жени.

Доброволци от 12 региона на страната – Монтана, Пловдив, Благоевград, Ловеч, Смолян, Търговище, Враца, Шумен, Добрич, Русе, Габрово и Ямбол се включиха в дейностите, в рамките на проекта. Повече от 200 жени от третата възраст взеха участие в дейностите и осъществяваха месечни срещи в Областните Съвети на Български Червен кръст в посочените по-горе региони. Част от тях бяха отговорни за разпространяване на въпросниците, други за обединяване на резултатите, трети за провеждане на интервютата. Всяка една от жените беше включена в точно определена дейност, в която се чувства полезна.

Компютърен курс за основни познания беше организиран за доброволците по проекта. Те бяха обучени как да използват Skype, Internet, Office programs. За тях това беше изключително важно, не само защото вече могат да се възползват от информацията, споделяна в интернет пространството и всички възможности, които носи това, но също така вече имат възможността да общуват със свои близки и роднини, живеещи в чужбина по икономически или други причини.

Като част от дейностите по проекта, доброволците организираха в своите групи попълването на въпросниците, изработени в рамките на проекта, а резултатите бяха обобщени на национално ниво. На една от срещите на национално ниво, организирана в рамките на дейността на Български Червен кръст, представители на всички региони, включени в проекта, определиха жените, чиито интервюта ще бъдат представени. Доброволци от Русе и Пловдив предложиха да представят две жени – Добра Иванова и Румяна Радкова чрез филм, изработен изцяло от тях. Филмите бяха представени на срещата по проекта, осъществена във Ферара, Италия.

Desislava Ilieva

Description of the EWA-group Ulm

The Working Group „Womens’ History“ at ZAWiW

The Working Group “Arbeitskreis Frauengeschichte” (Women’s history , www.forschendes-lernen.de/frauengeschichte) at ZAWiW (www.zawiw.de) exists since 1997 and thus is one of the oldest working groups at ZAWiW.

The members of this Working Group initially researched the lives of European women of the 18th and 19th century who had been role models in our women’s history (www.women-in-history.eu). These women have freed themselves from traditional gender roles and social conventions. They stood up for personal responsibility, equality, girls’ education and women’s studies. Their biographies were posted to the internet on a special website and translated into several languages.

For the book project “Self-willed and courageous - Pioneering Women in Ulm and Neu-Ulm” (www.forschendes-lernen.de/frauengeschichte/ulmer-strassenprojekt) we followed the trail of those 52 women, after which three percent of the 1700 streets in Ulm and Neu-Ulm are named. We were looking for information on the internet and in archives, and we interviewed some timewitnesses of women with street names. The book was published in 2009.



Women older than 50 years (50+) and older than 70 years (70+)

Our current project is the European learning partnership “European Women in older Age” (EWA, www.european-women.eu), where we are for the first time concerned with women of today. We want to find out, together with six other groups

of women 50+ in five European partner countries, what “successful” ageing means for women 70+.- and for us. We made and document 25 interviews with very old women. We described how they managed to actively age and we developed criteria for “gelingendes Altern”, for successful ageing.

We are 12 women (50 +) in the German EWA partner group between 53 and 82 years old. The group also includes the main coordinator of the EWA-project, Carmen Stadelhofer, the moderator, of our group, Dr. Pia Schmücker, and the project manager Gabriela Körting. Most of the participants of our group have completed their profession stage and/or the active family phase and seek a new orientation. They want to acquire new knowledge for themselves, improve their IT skills and be more confident in the application of new media. We bring in the experiences from our former professional careers as a teacher, doctor, researcher, journalist, germanist, romanist or others, or draw our experience from a mainly family-oriented life. We hope that through this project the lifetime achievements of women 70+ becomes more public knowledge. We also like to learn ourselves about the life of women in Europe and that the international exchange is enhanced. We meet generally once a month, if necessary more often, in the University of Ulm (library or the premises of ZAWiW), our meetings are documented by protocols. In addition to the real meetings, we remain connected by email, phone, also via skype, to discuss and to exchange texts, pictures or tables.

Technical Facilities

We are happy that we have access to university facilities and, using the PC pool of ZAWiW, also have access to the newest computer and expert advice. During an annual event of the Baden-Wuerttemberg state school for political education, we learned how to create audio files and video clips and we also have been instructed by ZAWiW employees.

Procedure

The criteria for “successful” ageing were exchanged with the partners, discussed and agreed upon. Most of our interviews live in the Ulm area, but there are also women from Frankfurt, Berlin and Giessen. They are friends or acquaintances of the authors, among which are locally or even nationally known personalities.

The proposed women were presented in the Working Group and we discussed

together who to elect, finally we realized 30 interviews.. During the interviews it became clear that it is difficult to strictly adhere to the requirements of the questionnaire, because the women were thus often prevented from speaking freely and in context. However, the questionnaires were very useful, because it was made sure not to lose the thread and obtain all necessary information. The interviewed women usually showed great understanding for this project and in general a very positive attitude towards Europe. They were mostly well motivated and are very curious about the final results of this project. But some of them didn't agreed with the publication of the results in the internet.

The results of the interviews were introduced to other womens' groups in Bad Urach and Ulm. A public appearance with presentation and subsequent discussion was a "first" experience for most members of our group. With the interest of the audience, however, the shyness disappeared . The "highlights" were the European partner meeting, where the English language was agreed upon as a partner language. Not all participants of the meeting of partners had learned English at school or in the workplace, partners coming from the Eastern countries had learned Russian. But with the help of google-translating-machines and above all with the help of voluntary translators during the meetings we succeeded to exchange ideas and experiences about methods and results of our work concerning the lives of women 70+, and to learn about the life of other women 50+ in the different groups. Despite some language barriers, there was an amazingly good atmosphere, fostered by common meals.

Results

We selected 25 women (70+) for the presentation of the project within EWA, from a total of 30 Ulmer women interviewed. All text documents, audio files and video clips of these interviews are online at the EWA website. Unfortunately, we have made less audio files and movies than was possible. The reason: we had just not collected enough work experience before doing the interviews.

It has been a big challenge for our group to make a concept for this EWA-book with the central results of the Learning Partnership EWA and to integrate and coordinate the ideas of all other groups by mailing list. The experience with our former book ("Ulmer und Neu-Ulmer Frauenstrassennamen") has been very helpful.

What has been surprising for us: Since the project was carried out, we came to very different results in our own group, but also in the context of all groups in assess-

ing how successful ageing can look like. We have gained new insights of different ways of “successful ageing”, we learned a lot about personal life stories, and we discussed our own perceptions of getting “old”. To get a deeper view in this question, in a European context, and to learn so much about personal experiences and visions, including very encouraging ones, is only possible in the context of such a long-duration project as a Grundtvig Learningpartnership

Barbara Heinze and Erdmute Dietmann-Beckert, EWA-group Ulm.

Gruppenbeschreibung der EWA-Gruppe in Ulm (DE)

Der Arbeitskreis “Frauengeschichte” am ZAWiW

Der Arbeitskreis (AK) Frauengeschichte am ZAWiW der Universität Ulm besteht seit 1997 und ist einer der ältesten Arbeitskreise „Forschendes Lernen“ am ZAWiW.

Wir, die Mitglieder des AK, recherchierten zunächst in dem Projekt „*Frauen Vorbilder in der Geschichte*“ zu Biografien von Frauen, die sich im Verlauf der geschichtlichen Entwicklungen von tradierten Rollenmustern und gesellschaftlichen Konventionen befreiten und sich für Selbstverantwortung, Gleichberechtigung, Frauenbildung und Frauenarbeit einsetzten. Diese Biografien wurden auf einer projekteigenen Website ins Internet gestellt und beschreiben in Kürze das Leben und Werk von für die Frauenemanzipation bedeutsamen Frauen aus mehreren europäischen Ländern in mehreren Sprachen.

In dem Buchprojekt „*Eigenwillig und couragiert – Wegweisende Frauen in Ulm und Neu-Ulm*“ verfolgten wir die Spuren der 52 Frauen, nach denen drei Prozent der ca. 1700 Straßen in Ulm und Neu-Ulm benannt sind. Wir recherchierten im Internet, in Archiven oder befragten Zeitzeug/-innen der Trägerinnen der Straßennamen. Das Buch erschien 2009.

Die Frauen 50+ und 70+

In der europäischen Lernpartnerschaft „EWA“ beschäftigen wir uns erstmals mit Frauen der Gegenwart. Durch Interviews mit hochaltrigen Frauen und deren

Analyse und Vergleich wollten wir Biographien dokumentieren, die für das höhere Alter vorbildlich sein könnten, ferner wollten wir in einem transnationalen Vergleich Kriterien für "gelingendes" Altern herausarbeiten. In der Ulmer EWA-Gruppe arbeiten 12 Frauen mit (alle zwischen 53 und 82 Jahren alt), einschließlich der Koordinatorin des Gesamtprojekts, Carmen Stadelhofer, der Moderatorin Dr. Pia Schmücker sowie Gabriela Körting, die bei der Antragsstellung des Projekts und dem europäischen Projektmanagement sehr hilfreich war.

Wir Interviewerinnen 50+ haben meist die berufliche und aktive Familienphase weitgehend abgeschlossen, wollen uns neu orientieren und auch selbst neues Wissen und vertiefte IT-Kenntnisse und größere Sicherheit im Umgang mit den Neuen Medien erwerben. Wir verfügen über verschiedene berufliche Qualifikationen (als Lehrerin, Ärztin, Forscherin, Journalistin, Germanistin,...) oder führten ein hauptsächlich familienorientiertes Leben.

Wir erhoffen uns durch dieses Projekt, dass die Lebensleistungen der Frauen 70+ auch öffentlich bekannter werden und dass durch dieses Projekt unser Wissen über das Leben von Frauen in Europa vertieft und der internationale Austausch verstärkt werden. Wir treffen uns in der Regel einmal im Monat, meist auf dem Gelände der Universität Ulm (Unibibliothek, Räume des ZAWiW), vor Partnerschaftstreffen oder jetzt in der Schlußphase des Projekts, auch in kürzeren Zeitabständen. Diese Treffen werden durch Protokolle dokumentiert. Neben den realen Treffen findet die Zusammenarbeit durch Austausch und Kommentierung von Texten, Fotos oder Tabellen per E-Mail, Telefonat oder auch Skype statt.

Technische Möglichkeiten

Wir haben das Glück, dass wir auf Einrichtungen der Universität zurückgreifen können und haben im PC-Pool des ZAWiW die modernsten Computer und fachkundige Beratung zur Verfügung. Ferner besuchten wir Veranstaltungen der Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Baden-Württemberg und lernten u.a. das Erstellen von Audiodateien und Videofilmen. Ebenso wurden wir von ZAWiW-Mitarbeiter/-innen in die Anwendung der neuesten IT-Medien eingewiesen und auch auf Nutzen und Gefahren aufmerksam gemacht.

Einige Teilnehmerinnen des AK haben vor dem Projekt EWA schon bei einigen innerdeutschen onlinebasierten Projekten mitgearbeitet wie "Gemeinsam lernen

übers Netz“ (www.gemeinsamlernen.de), das Lerncafé, (www.lerncafe.de) und sie sind im ViLE-Netzwerk (www.vile-netzwerk.de) engagiert. Einige haben auch in früheren Lernpartnerschaften wie „Townstories“ (www.gemeinsamlernen.de/townstories/) oder „Danube-Networkers“ (<http://www.danube-networkers-2008.eu/>) Erfahrungen in europäischer Zusammenarbeit gesammelt. Inzwischen sind wir ein „eingespieltes“ Team.

Vorgehensweise

Die Kriterien für „gelingendes“ Altern wurden mit den Partnern ausgetauscht, diskutiert und gemeinsam festgelegt. Wir fanden die Frauen 70+ für die Interviews zum größten Teil im Raum Ulm, aber es sind auch Frauen aus Frankfurt, Berlin und anderen Städten dabei. Sie sind aus dem Freundes- oder Bekanntenkreis der Autorinnen, zum Teil lokal oder gar überregional bekannte Persönlichkeiten.

Die von den Mitgliedern unserer Gruppe vorgeschlagenen Frauen wurden bei unseren Treffen vorgestellt und diskutiert, schließlich führten wir arbeitsteilig 30 Interviews durch. Die Durchführung der Interviews erwies sich als schwierig, weil sich meist die konsequente Verfolgung der Fragen des von den EWA-Gruppen verabschiedeten Fragebogen nicht realisieren ließ. Es zeigte sich bald, dass die interviewten Frauen freier reden, wenn sie nicht ständig durch Fragen aus ihrem Redefluss herausgerissen werden. Die Fragebögen bildeten jedoch das Rückgrat für die „Organisation“ der Interviews bzw. halfen bei der Vervollständigung der benötigten Informationen. Es gab wenig Motivationsprobleme für die Durchführung der Interviews, wir trafen bei den von uns interviewten hochaltrigen Frauen durchweg auf viel Verständnis für dieses Projekt und auf eine grundsätzlich sehr positive Einstellung zu Europa. Allerdings lehnten einige der Interviewten eine Veröffentlichung der Ergebnisse im Internet ab.

Die Ergebnisse unserer Arbeit wurden anderen Senior/-innen im Kontext von Veranstaltungen vorgestellt, z.B. in Bad Urach, oder im Seniorentreff der Stadt Ulm. Das öffentliche Auftreten mit Präsentation und anschließender Diskussion war für die meisten Frauen des AK zunächst ungewohnt. Die europäischen EWA-Partnertreffen waren aber das absolute „Highlight“, obwohl es unter uns enorme Sprachbarrieren gab, vor allem mit den Teilnehmerinnen des ehemaligen „Ostblocks“, die

nicht wie wir Englisch, sondern Russisch als Fremdsprache gelernt haben. Aber mit Hilfe von Internetübersetzungshilfen und ehrenamtlich arbeitenden Übersetzerinnen bei den Partnerschaftstreffen (meist die Koordinatorinnen) gelang es uns, uns über Methoden und Ergebnisse unserer Arbeit über Frauen 70+ auszutauschen und auch etwas über das Leben der anderen Frauen 50+ in den verschiedenen Gruppen zu erfahren.

Ergebnisse

Von den über 30 von uns interviewten hochaltrigen Frauen wurden 25 für die Präsentation innerhalb des Projekts EWA ausgewählt. Die Textdokumente dieser Interviews befinden sich im Internet auf der Projektwebiste von EWA, ebenso die Hörbeispiele (Audiodateien) und Videofilme. Insgesamt haben wir weniger Audiodateien und Filme angefertigt, als möglich gewesen wäre, wir hatten vor den Interviews einfach nicht ausreichend Erfahrung damit sammeln können.

Eine große Herausforderung war für unsere Gruppe die Konzeptionierung des hier vorliegenden Buches mit den zentralen Ergebnissen des Gesamtprojektes „European Women in older Age“(EWA), was viel Koordinationsarbeit per Mailingliste unter uns und mit den anderen Gruppen beinhaltete. Hier kamen uns unsere Erfahrungen aus dem letzten Buchprojekt zugute.

Was uns überraschte: Die Vorstellungen vom „gelingenden Altern“ waren innerhalb unserer Gruppe wie auch innerhalb aller Partnergruppen sehr unterschiedlich. Dies war eine sehr interessante Beobachtung für uns und führte zu vielen Diskussionen, auch über unsere eigenen Vorstellungen vom Altwerden. Diesbezüglich einen tieferen Einblick gewonnen zu haben, auch im europäischen Vergleich, und so viele persönlichen Dinge erfahren zu haben, auch viele ermutigende, war das Besondere dieses Projektes bzw.ist aus unserer Sicht nur im Rahmen einer längerfristigen Lernpartnerschaft, bei der sich alle Beteiligten aktiv einbringen, möglich.

Barbara Heinze und Erdmute Dietmann-Beckert, EWA-Gruppe Ulm

Our team

The VHS team - 17 people- has already a lot of experience due to the project of the Danube-Networkers. In our team are women and men from all walks of life: authors from the writing workshop, former teachers, people working in adult education and many more. Maybe this diversity is exactly what is significant for this team. It was not difficult to



win their enthusiasm for the project European women in older age. We are a very homogenous team by now that meets on a regular basis.

The realization of the EWA project

We wanted to begin with the task of researching the social-political framework that influenced the women's life of this generation, beginning in 1920. Knowing these facts it was easier to carry on with the quantitative interviews with a questionnaire and in-depth interviews.

Workshops for the technique and conducting interviews

We chose the narrative-biographic method and interviewed each other in our team to try it out during a workshop. The coordinator put the instructions together so we knew what we had to watch out for while conducting in-depth interviews. We wanted to do really authentic interviews, so we used a video camera to keep the material in its original form.

Selection criteria for the interview partners

We started looking for women with an interesting biography. They also should have chosen goals in their life after work and set an example for "active aging". Our role models are between 60 and 90 years "old". We filmed women that started 60+ with dance and theater, got involved in social activities and enjoy every day of aging.

What makes them all unique is their goal to form solidarity between the generations and help people in need.

Results

We have 12 video interviews that are in a short version on youtube under ewavienna. This form has the advantage of a great media response and we get a lot of positive feedback about our interviews and the EWA project. During different local events regarding active aging our video clips were seen with great interest.

Impressions and experiences

During our meetings we got to know biographies of different women in different countries and compare them as well. We stated that the biographies of women of this generation are in general similar: less education than their brothers, marriage, children, loss of partner with the often taken chance of a new orientation. More surprising that political - historical events and their effects on the personal life are not considered. To work on the biographies of other women led many to the experience to think about the own.

“Active aging” is a development that is very individual. To get to know this from other European women was enrichment for us.

We see this project as a call for a better life in a joint Europe together.

Gerti Zupanich, coordinator VHS Vienna

Unser Team

Das VHS-Team – 17 Personen - bringt bereits viel Erfahrung aus dem Danube-Networkers-Projekt mit. Es besteht aus Frauen und Männern aus ganz unterschiedlichen beruflichen und privaten Bereichen: Autorinnen in Schreibwerkstätten, ehemaligen Lehrerinnen und Lehrern, in der Erwachsenenbildung



Tätigen, u.a. Vielleicht macht gerade diese Diversität die Kreativität aus, die dieses Team kennzeichnet. Sie wieder für ein Projekt wie European women in older age (EWA) zu begeistern, war keine schwere Aufgabe. Wir sind ein homogenes Team geworden, das sich regelmäßig trifft.

Die Realisation des EWA-Projektes

Wir stellten uns vorweg selbst die Aufgabe die gesellschaftspolitischen Rahmenbedingungen, beginnend mit 1920, zu recherchieren, die das Leben von Frauen dieser Generation beeinflusst haben. Mit diesem Vorwissen ausgestattet war es leichter, sowohl die quantitativen Interviews mit dem Fragebogen, als auch die Tiefeninterviews durchzuführen.

Workshops zu Techniken und Führen eines Interviews

Wir wählten die Narrativ-biographische Methode und interviewten uns zu Testzwecken gegenseitig im Team bei einem Workshop. Die Koordinatorin stellte eine Anweisung zusammen, worauf bei den Tiefeninterviews zu achten sei. Weil wir sehr authentische Interviews machen wollten, benutzten wir eine Videokamera, um die Aussagen der Frauen im Original festzuhalten.

Auswahlkriterien der Interviewpartnerinnen

Im Bekanntenkreis wurde nach geeigneten Frauen mit einer interessanten Biografie geforscht.

Sie sollten sich außerdem in der nachberuflichen Lebensphase noch Ziele gesetzt haben und ein Beispiel für „aktiv Altern“ sein. Unsere „Role models“ sind zwischen 60 und 90 Jahre alt. Wir filmten Frauen die ab 60plus mit Tanzen und Theaterspielen begonnen haben, oder sich im sozialen Bereich engagieren, und/oder jeden Tag auch im höheren Alter genießen. Was sie alle auszeichnet, ist ihr Anliegen die Solidarität zwischen den Generationen zu fördern und sich um die Bedürfnisse benachteiligter Menschen zu kümmern.

Ergebnisse

Wir haben 12 Videointerviews, die gekürzt auf youtube unter ewavienna gestellt sind. Diese Form hat den Vorteil einer großen medialen Breitenwirkung und wir bekommen bereits sehr positive Rückmeldungen über unsere Interviews und das EWA Projekt. Im Rahmen diverser lokaler Veranstaltungen zu „aktiv Altern“ sind unsere Videoclips ebenfalls mit großem Zuspruch aufgenommen worden.

Impressionen

Bei unseren Meetings konnten wir Frauenbiografien aus anderen Ländern kennen lernen und Vergleiche anstellen. Wir stellen fest, Frauenbiografien dieser Generation sind grundsätzlich ähnlich: weniger Schulbildung als ihre Brüder, Heirat und Kinder, Verlust von Lebenspartnern – ein gravierender Einschnitt - mit der (oft) genutzten Chancen eine Neuorientierung zu beginnen. Eher überraschend die Ausblendung von historisch-politischen Ereignissen und deren persönlichen Folgen. Sich mit den Biografien anderer zu beschäftigen, führte dazu, sich die eigenen in Erinnerung zu rufen. „Aktiv zu altern“ ist ein Prozess der sehr individuelle Formen hat. Diese von anderen europäischen Frauen kennen zu lernen war eine Bereicherung für uns.

Wir sehen dieses Projekt als Auftrag für ein besseres Zusammenleben in einem gemeinsamen Europa an.

Gerti Zupanich, Koordinatorin VHS-Vienna

University of South Bohemia in České Budejovice, Czech Republic

The University of South Bohemia in **České Budějovice** is a public university type of school. It specializes as research university of natural scientific, humanistic and social orientation. It offers a broad spectrum of 250 study disciplines to more than 13 000 students at eight faculties (Economics, Arts, Education, Natural History, Theology, Health and Social Care, Agriculture and Fishing and Protection of Water) and at University Institute of Physical Biology. The strengths of the University include science and research, lifelong education and ability of orientation of the school on regional issues. It offers interest and non-professional education in study programs, modules and courses of the University of the Third Age to adults and seniors. It allows systematic education to seniors, intergeneration and project learning, active participation in national, border and European programs and projects NROS 2005; PHARE CBC 2004, 2005; INTERREG IIIA 2006, 2007; SOLiLL 2002, eLiLL 2006.

In academic year 2010/11, 1245 seniors study at the University of South Bohemia in 39 programs of the University of the Third Age. 12 seniors-mentors are engaged in the Grundtvig program of the EWA 2010 – 2012 partnership project.

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Centro Documentazione Donna, Ferrara, Italy

The Centro Documentazione Donna (CDD) is a cultural centre specialised on production and collection of literature and documentation relevant to women's studies and issues. Since its establishment in 1980, it has been leading the way among others similar Italian institutions.

As our main activity, we run a Gender Library containing approximately 7.000 books both fiction and non fiction. The non fiction section ranges from history, anthropology, economy to psychology and philosophy, all related to women's condition. We also host a newspaper library where complete year's issues of many feminist magazines (200 titles approximately) are collected. The archive contains the documentation produced during the '70s by the women's liberation movements. The CDD library participates to the Ferrara Public Libraries Consortium and is in agreement with the Town Hall. It provides borrowing and counselling services to researchers and students for their dissertations.

You can find the CDD library catalogue at the following web address:

<http://opac.unife.it/SebinaOpac/Opac>

Other CDD activities are: Books presentations, screening of movies and relevant debates, lectures, conventions, seminars, expositions, reading/ writing workshops.
Contact: Luciana Tufani, Centro Documentazione Donna, via Terranuova 12/b, 44100 Ferrara, Italy, Tel. + 39 0532 205046, Fax +39 0532 53186, cddferrara@alice.it, Website: www.informadonna.fe.it, www.comune.fe.it/donne

Kaunas Women's Employment Information Centre Association, Lithuania

Kaunas Women Employment Information Centre is a public organization working with women and for their sake. Opened in 1994 on the initiative of Kaunas Municipality and Labour organization, its mission is to improve the status of women in Lithuania solving the issues of their employment, establishment and development of business, encouragement of the leadership of women, as well as the influence of public policy upon the problems of equality.

Since 1994, the agency of employment, information and re-qualification has been open at the Centre. Here, skilled consultants render services to the unemployed women free of charge, organize the personnel selection for free, mediate in the employment process, keep relations with employers, inform women about events, courses, possibilities of volunteering in the Centre or other nongovernmental organizations.

Women are directed to the Centre by the local Labour Exchange, Social Division of Kaunas, and other social partners. The Employment Agency of the Centre helps women to get jobs as baby-sitters, assistant-workers, accountants, insurance agents, etc.

The „MILDA“ club (Women Initiative for the growth of Democracy in Lithuania) was established in December 2002, seated at the Women Employment Information Centre of Kaunas. Its aim is to form a positive image of a woman-politician and to seek for the equal opportunities of gender in politics.

The club of business women „The 21-st Century“ was opened in 1996. It unites 30 full-fledged members and associates. Its mission is to create the environment favourable for business women in Lithuania, improving the image of a business woman, seeking better laws and state programmes to encourage female business. The club keeps close relationships with business-women of Estonia, Latvia, Finland, Kaliningrad and St. Petersburg regions.

Kaunas Women Employment Information Centre's objectives are:

to promote women to leadership positions in career, business and politics not only in Kaunas county , but in Lithuania aswell.

to offer women training in order to make them more competitive in the labour market (ICT, English, accountancy, self-esteem).

to create networks for women in business and politics.

to inform women on employment possibilities in Kaunas region.to provide job placement service.

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Università delle Tre Età Macomer, Sardinia, Italy

Unitre is a cultural no-profit association working in the field of adult lifelong learning. It was founded in 1991 as a voluntary service and it is connected with similar associations all over Italy and in foreign Countries. 66% of our learners are women, aged between 30 and 80. Our aims are:

To contribute to social and cultural promotion of adults through concrete initiatives.

To promote, support and activate studies, researches, and other cultural initiatives for the development of lifelong learning, To activate cooperation among different generational cultures, in order to achieve a real human academy, To reach our aims we work in different areas. Education: didactic courses, researches, seminars.

Experimentation: our learners can attend various laboratories which deal with art, literature, dance, singing, physical training, foreign languages, informatics

Socialization: we organise cultural meetings, excursions, journeys.

Previous European project: „Town Stories“ (<http://www.gemeinsamlernen.de/townstories>)

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Red Cross Organisation, Sofia Bulgaria

Bulgarian Red Cross is a voluntary organisation, part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and is guided by its Fundamental Principles: Human-

ity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Voluntary Service, Unity and Universality. Through its network of volunteers in the whole country, the BRC renders assistance to the vulnerable people in disaster and crisis situations. By means of training programmes and activities for the benefit of the public, the National Red Cross Society contributes to alleviating and preventing the suffering in all its forms, protects health and life and ensures respect for the human being.

The Bulgarian Red Cross has the following strategic priorities:

To react quickly and effectively to the vulnerability on a local scale;

To direct its efforts to the areas where it could be most influential and achieve the best possible results. These core areas constitute the mainstay for the authority, entity and significance of the overall organization, such as:

To popularise and affirm the Fundamental Principles of the Movement and its basic humanitarian values; To assist in disaster situations; To assure disaster preparedness; To provide health and social care for the benefit of the public. To reform and enhance its capacity (especially in the field of financial resources) so as to become “a well-functioning National Society” that contributes to the development and consolidation of civil society in Bulgaria.

Main areas of activity:

Support and participation independently or in cooperation with other formations and specialised services for prevention and reduction of effects of disasters, accidents and calamities/crises. Assistance to vulnerable and impoverished citizens, social and medical institutions etc., and provision of social and health services;

Organisation of and maintaining social institutions; Social assistance and organizing health and care activities, social legal and psychological consultations;

Protecting and improving people’s health, prevention of diseases and traumas through educational programmes and activities; Organisation of training events and courses in first pre-medical aid, first psychological aid, drug addicts’ problems, HIV/AIDS, promotion of non-remunerated blood donation, etc.;

Training, qualifying and re-qualifying of staff members, with a view to implementing the organisational activities and achieving its goals, and issuing the respective certificates; Organisation and participation in meetings, seminars, courses, conferences, press conferences, competitions and reviews on the major activities of the Bulgarian Red Cross and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

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Zentrum für Allgemeine Wissenschaftliche Weiterbildung der Universität Ulm

ZAWiW's task is in the development and testing of innovative methods in adult education, with focus on fostering self-organised learning of older adults with the support of the new media. The concept "learning through research" had been already tested in many of ZAWiW's working groups ("http://www.uni-ulm.de/uni/fak/zawiw/forschendes_lernen/de" Forschendes Lernen). Members of the working group "<http://www.women-in-history.eu/about-the-project.html>", "Women change the society" AK Frauengeschichte" (Women's history) participate actively in this project and have cooperated on the development of the project concept.

ZAWiW has many years of experience in the coordination of European projects. The coordination of the European network "<http://www.lill-online.net/>" LiLL and the projects "<http://www.solill.net/>", SoLiLL and "<http://www.elill.net/>", eLiLL. It cooperated as partner in international projects such as the development of Train-the-Trainer courses in "<http://www.ict4t.net/>", ICT4 and "<http://www.seniorlearning.eu/>", Senior Learning. Zawiw has much experience in the development of methods for accessing the Internet for older people - project ("<http://www.senioren-internet-initiativen.de/>" \o "opens in a new window" SII), in the initiation of virtual learning and working groups on a national and international level ("<http://www.gemeinsamlernen.de/>" gemeinsam lernen, "<http://www.lerncafe.de/>" Lerncafé, "<http://www.solill.net/>" SoLiLL, "<http://www.gemeinsamlernen.de/euconet>", EUCONET, "<http://www.gemeinsamlernen.de/townstories>" Townstories, "<http://www.danube-networkers-2008.eu/>", "Danube Networkers" Danbue-Networkers and others) and in the technical realisation of multimedia projects.

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VHS Ottakring, Austria

The VHS Ottakring/Hernals is one of the adult education institutes of the "Die Wiener Volkshochschulen GmbH".

The overall social task of the Vienna Volkshochschulen reach far beyond the

traditional education concept. With their specialised institutes, they contribute since many years to the successful social and social development of the town. Part of their core tasks is to develop an area-wide easily accessible program for all people independently of age, gender, origin and prior education. One of the most successful innovations of the last years is the „University Meets Public“ together with Vienna University.

The VHS Ottakring has its main seat in a quarter of Vienna with strong inflow of migrants. For that reason it has made the work with migrants to one of its central tasks. For example the ALFA-Zentrum with special literacy and German courses as well as a youth education centre (JUBIZ) that offers young people between 16 and 25 years of age a training program from literacy/basic education over language training till catching up with the completion of secondary school qualifications and apprenticeship.

VHS Ottakring as well as its branch Hernals have twice a year changing course offers: language, body, soul, creativity, personal and new communication techniques, special subjects for men and women, programs for children and youth, courses about human rights, innovative cooking events, lectures about travel experiences, University Meets Public, and much more.

Our partner organisations support the project DanubeNetworkers with their infrastructure and their know-how from previous EU-projects. In September 2009 we will host one of the project meetings.

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GROUP PICTURES

