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Fundacja Aktywny Senior (Aktywny Senior Foundation)

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Recapitulation of the programme as part of the *@ktywny Senior* project

Summary: Prezentowany artykuł stanowi podsumowanie całego projektu *@ktywny Senior* z perspektywy jego inicjatora, organizatora i kierownika. Szczegółowo omawia inspiracje, cele i zadania, jakie postawili przed sobą twórcy przedsięwzięcia, a następnie – w ramach dobrych praktyk, które mogą być przydatne innym podmiotom, omawia mocne i słabe strony zrealizowanego projektu.

Key words: *@ktywny Senior*, project, age of late adulthood, seniors.

The idea of the project emerged from the observations of the behaviour of seniors in medical centres. These were complemented by the diagnosis of the senior environment carried out by the Dolnośląska Rada ds. Seniorów (Lower Silesian council

for senior citizen matters) at the office of the Marszałek Województwa Dolnośląskiego (Lower Silesian voivodship marshal) and the University of the Third Age (U3A) in Wrocław which indicates a great need for developmental workshops for this social group. The dynamic development of the U3As in Wrocław and the Lower Silesia may serve as an example. The problems of the ageing society are visible in many aspects of social life. The clinics are one of them, where one may encounter a substantial number of "unnecessary" visits of seniors which often have no confirmation in health-related issues – the conclusion was drawn from conversations with the medical staff. Sitting in the waiting rooms of the GPs is rather a result of the need to maintain contacts with other people and to leave the house "for a reason", as well as of the feeling of alienation in their immediate environments. Inspired by these conclusions we have created the @ktywny Senior project, which combined various organisations-entities working with seniors. These are the U3As, Senior Clubs, non-governmental organisations, and various Roman Catholic Church-related organisations concentrating on the promotion of being active among seniors.

The leading entity was the Ogólnopolskie Stowarzyszenie Na Rzecz Rozwoju Otwartej Opieki Zdrowotnej "Nova-Med" (the Polish association for the development of open healthcare "Nova Med"). Of course, the University of the Third Age at the University of Wrocław also participated - it is a centre combining a constant source of inspirations with the potential of the teachers. The Fundacja Wspierania Organizacji Pozarządowych "Umbrella" (the NGOs support foundation "Umbrella") that manages the Centrum Sektor 3 became the right place to conduct the entirety of the endeavour.

The @ktywny Senior project was a pilot initiative aimed at seniors – people of over 60 years of age, inhabitants of the Popowice district of Wrocław. The project lasted for 3 months with the participation of 60 people. The classes and the workshops were organised in the building of the Centrum Sektor 3. The planned medical examinations were carried out in a clinic situated next to the Centrum. The open air recreational activities took place in the park in the vicinity of one of the mentioned buildings. Therefore, the location proved to fulfil a whole range of educational needs.

An attempt to transfer the experiences of the University of the Third Age at the University of Wrocław to a city district of exceptionally high number of seniors estimated at 22,8% of the population constituted the reason for the implementation of the project. Apart from the Popowice districts, the areas of Gądów, Kosmonautów, and Kozanów have a similar population age structure.

The main aim of the project was to increase the mobility, social, physical, and professional activity of seniors (people of over 60 years of age) and to encourage the development of local initiatives supporting the general social integration, and to prevent the marginalisation of seniors.

Basic computer and internet skills training course constituted an essential element of the project; its organisation was up to the students and graduates of pedagogics from Stowarzyszenie AVEC (AVEC Association). The course was complemented by an English language course focusing on the vocabulary necessary to use computers.

Although not all of the scheduled classes took place eventually, the aim was achieved (self-education with the use of the provided teaching materials that all of the participants received proved to be a good idea). Physical activities were organised, as well; these were an introduction to the basic exercises activating this age group and relaxing exercises connected with using computers. These were organised by the employees of the University School of Physical Education in Wrocław, with the use of the hitherto cooperation of the University of the Third Age with this School. The classes focused on proper breathing practice and relaxing activities complemented with Nordic Walking. The physical activities were preceded by medical examinations. The memory of the participants of the training courses was examined, as well. On the basis of the medical examinations referrals for further specialist consultations were provided for those who needed them.

The complementary programme included participation in classes related to selected aspects of andragogical, philosophical, and gerontological knowledge as well as computer skills. The participants of the project attended biographical and genealogical workshops. The seminar on the quality of life of seniors that constituted a search for the predictors of good ageing included the subject of intergenerational relationships, as well. The reading and media education at the district library generated great interest, with the establishment of the "Wakacyjne Koło Fotografii Cyfrowej" (the holiday club of digital photography) as its result. The "Spotkanie z Seniorem" (meeting with seniors) series was aimed at realising the importance of one's own interests, the continuation of which is a source of satisfaction in the period of late adulthood.

The programme was evaluated by the participants of the courses with the use of a specially drawn up survey.

The aims and objectives of the project were compatible with the strategic goals of the "Strategia Wrocław w perspektywie 2020 plus"¹⁾ (strategy – Wrocław in the 2020 plus perspective) in many of the areas defined therein, such as the methodological suppositions – increasing the importance of social capital and seeking and dissemination of innovative solutions. In the people, life, and health field the aforementioned compatibility was realised in the proposed holistic approach to an individual in health policy, the promotion of responsible lifestyle, and teaching about the negative consequences of living irresponsibly. In relation to the implementation of the aims of the health policy the knowledge of how to live healthily and of prophylactics was promoted, and in the area of social assistance – through the creation of conditions necessary for the development of activity and self-reliance of seniors, especially supporting the self-help-related forms of activation and the endeavours aimed at helping the seniors. The problem of the self-exclusion of the seniors was addressed, and measures to prevent the exclusion in civilisation and social aspects caused by the lack of computer use skills were undertaken with utmost dedication.

¹⁾ http://bip.um.wroc.pl/wps/wcm/connect/398102804280289a965bd796e258c1d9/strategia_pl.pdf?MOD=AJPERES, retrieved: 12.12.2008 r.

The fact of the inclusion of the educational programme in the relatively wide scope of strategic aims of social development may serve to exemplify their rightness.

During the preparation of the project the idea to select the beneficiaries with the help of the local clinic proved to be correct. Such an entity is generally trusted, which allows the organisers of the projects to appear reliable. It also draws the attention of doctors to the new prophylactic of people whose health is to be understood as physical, emotional, and social well-being.

The programme is presented in the chart.

Chart 1. Programme of the @ktywny Senior project

	Types of activities	For 1 group
1	Computer and internet skills training	30
2	Physical culture, physical and health education - theory	13
3	Practical physical activities	12
4	Learning from life and one's own biography	4
5	The philosophy of human beings	10
6	Quality of life of seniors	4
7	Constructing group communication	6
8	Educational relationships – „parents, grandparents, grandchildren“	1
9	Reading and media education	2
10	English language	1
11	Seniors' meetings with interests	4
12	Information on osteoporosis	1
13	The modern bank with its internet services	2
	TOTAL	90

Source: Developed by the leading entities.

Organisation of the project was carried out according to the objectives prepared earlier and it has gained the support of the beneficiaries. In the longer perspective it is assumed that on the basis of the experiences related to the implementation of the project it will constitute a model of Wrocław-based educational initiative aimed at seniors to be described and repeated. The structure of the project will allow for its implementation in certain conditions, in any place, by any entity interested, and in the scope tailored to the local needs and opportunities.

Definition of the objectives of the organisation of the "Centrum szkoleniowe dla liderów i instruktorów projektu przy Centrum Sektor3" (the training centre for project leaders and instructors at the Centrum Sektor 3) on the basis of the project ought to be established, which would constitute a location where the future teachers would gain knowledge and practice on the basis of the results and experiences connected with the discussed project.

The results of the works were included in the schedule of the XII Lower Silesian Science Festival under the title: "Senior – aktywny Człowiek, Obywatel, Wrocławianin" (seniors – active people, citizens, and inhabitants of Wrocław).

An ongoing promotional campaign serves to constantly provide information on the project that implements gerontological prophylactics as well as social activation of seniors outside the hitherto prevalent standards along with the construction of social capital with the participation of seniors. Such attitude was not present previously.

The methods of work, in relation to the training courses as well as the supplementary activities were based on university standards. The classes were mostly conducted with the use of higher education means and forms – lectures, seminars, and workshops. The rule of feedback was also taken into account, and it was realised through the evaluation of the project by its participants.

The budget of the project was planned correctly and the final balance turned out as expected; however, it was in 97% hypothetical, as the assumed costs were not, in fact, spent, because of the voluntary work of the teachers and instructors. The project had minor financial support from two sponsors – the BZWBK and DnB NORD banks.

The dissemination of computer knowledge through the beneficiaries' acquisition of basic computer and internet use skills, including starting an email account, starting a bank account and using electronic banking, learning to use the information related to city transport, buses, and trains schedules, and making appointments in the clinic via the internet were the results of the implemented project.

The effects of crucial importance were those related to physical activity, in the broad sense of the word. Here the beneficiaries gained knowledge of their health, learned to do a number of physical exercises aimed at improving their basic physical fitness, they learned about the importance of physical activity in prophylactics and treatment of cancer, as well as the idea of healing through movement. During the physical training tailored for people of advanced age the seniors had an opportunity to get to know and practice Nordic Walking and relaxation techniques and they gained knowledge about learning to keep balance, to prevent falling over, of breathing exercises and general fitness exercises.

Psychological problems of people of advanced aged needed to be emphasised. The problems were not only addressed, but also attempts at solving them were made. Group integration allowed for an establishment of neighbourhood relationships and setting up a network of cooperation between the beneficiaries.

Choosing the Centrum Sektor 3 location turned out right because of a number of reasons. Optimal conditions were created there, for group work as well as individual practice (sufficient number of computer desks).

The team of organisers-teachers was made up of employees of higher schools, students, voluntary workers, and doctoral studies students. The interdisciplinary staff included a doctor, a specialist in andragogics, a psychologist, a sociologist,

a philosophy scholar, a language teacher, a computer technician, a rehabilitation specialist, a lawyer, a bank employee, and an economist.

Conclusions

The organisers were convinced that it would be possible to establish contacts with the Powiatowe Biuro Pracy (district employment agency). Unfortunately, the agency does not deal with such issues and it was clearly surprised by our proposition. This proves that in the future it must be attempted to solve the problem in a different way, perhaps with the help of non-governmental organisations. The grant application submitted to the Urząd Miasta Wrocławia (Wrocław city office) was rejected by the local government officials responsible for the social policy related to seniors.

The assumed final effect was an integration of inhabitants of the district expressed through the establishment of the "Popowiczanie" association. Analysis of the evaluation survey suggests that the beneficiaries were unanimous in their positive assessment of the programme of the project.

Bibliography:

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http://bip.um.wroc.pl/wps/wcm/connect/398102804280289a965bd796e258c1d9/strategia_pl.pdf?MOD=AJPERES, retrieved: 12.12.2008 r.

<http://www.festiwal.wroc.pl/2009/index.php?c=events&year=2009&do=searchresult&category=298>, retrieved: 19.09.2009 r.

Information about the partners and organisers of the *@ktywny Senior* project

- I. Fundacja Wspierania Organizacji Pozarządowych Umbrella (non-governmental organisations support foundation Umbrella) and Centrum Wspierania Organizacji Pozarządowych Sektor3 (non-governmental organisations support centre Sektor 3)



While realising the aims appointed by the Wrocław borough in 2007 the "Umbrella" foundation was established and has been managing the Centrum Wspierania Organizacji Pozarządowych Sektor3 (non-governmental organisations support centre Sektor 3) ever since (the objective is to be continued until 2012). As part of this project cooperation with over 200 non-governmental organisations was started, which makes it stronger and broadens the contacts with their leaders and the area of social problems that these organisations attempt to solve. The help that has been provided to Wrocław-based NGOs and informal groups mostly consists in counselling, training courses, and access to resources (class rooms, equipment). These activities allow for a broader participation of the staff and partners of the foundation in various projects organised by the city, the European Union, and other international organisations.

The foundation was active as one of the organisers of the *@ktywny Senior* project aimed at the inhabitants of the Popowice district of Wrocław; the objective of the project was to increase the mobility, social, physical, and professional activity of seniors (people of over 60 years of age) and to encourage the development of local initiatives supporting the general social integration, and to prevent the marginalisation

of seniors. As part of the project the Centrum Sektor 3 participated in the multiple editions of the computer skills training course for seniors [PZERI Oddz. Fabryczna (the national association of the retired, the handicapped, and the recipients of social insurance aid – Fabryczna district division), Polskie Towarzystwo Laryngektomowanych (the national association of laryngectomees), the N@stor Project], a series of integration meetings for local organisations and community "Spotkania z kulturą naszych sąsiadów" (meetings with the culture of our neighbours), "Targi Organizacji Pozarządowych" (NGOs fair), etc. Centrum Sektor 3 is also a place where various student internships are organised; a place where voluntary workers are active. The foundation participated in a social employment programme for the long-time unemployed organised by MOPS (the city social assistance centre) and an employment agency, accepting for a traineeship and subsequently employing 2 people.

The "Umbrella" foundation as the entity managing Centrum Sektor 3 is commonly associated with this location which provides the means necessary to conduct the @ktywny Senior project. The 650 m² building at Legnicka street 65 has an open space office rooms on two levels with 15 desks and the necessary furniture, computers with state-of-the-art programmes, telephones, computer lab with 10 computer desks, an air-conditioned conference room with space for 80 people, mobile training rooms with 30, 20, or 50 places, and a consultation room, where up to 10 people can work. We offer access to a fax machine, printers, copiers, multimedia projectors, laptops, digital voice recorders, and flipcharts. The availability of a recreational room and a kitchen should also be mentioned. The building has constituted a base for the realisation of all the training courses specified in the project. It is accessible for the handicapped. There are 50 parking spaces in front of the building. The location is easily accessible by means of public transport from all points in the Fabryczna district.

Centrum Sektor 3 is well-known and valued by the local community, by government agencies as well as the inhabitants of the Popowice and Gądów Mały districts.

II. Ogólnopolskie Stowarzyszenie Na Rzecz Rozwoju Otwartej Opieki Zdrowotnej "Nova-Med" (the Polish association for the development of open healthcare "Nova Med")



Ogólnopolskie Stowarzyszenie Na Rzecz Rozwoju Otwartej Opieki Zdrowotnej "Nova-Med" (the Polish association for the development of open healthcare "Nova Med") is located in Wrocław at Legnicka street 6.

The aim of the association is to support the development of open healthcare, including individuals, organisations and methods of work ensuring an improvement of health of the society.

Researchers from higher schools in Wrocław, entrepreneurs, and doctors are the members of the association.

The statutory aims of the association are implemented through:

- A. Integration of the local business community and professionals – the practitioners and scientists of numerous fields - around the common objectives related to open healthcare,
- B. Establishment, promotion, evaluation, and improvement of standards connected with open healthcare activity,
- C. Educational initiatives in the field of medical knowledge and management skills in the form of meetings, training courses, seminars, conferences, traineeships, development programmes, and other forms of education,
- D. Creating and making available of modern IT tools and techniques supporting the functioning of individuals and organisations,
- E. Organising trips and missions for its members aimed at exchange of experiences in Europe and the rest of the world as well as implementation of regional, national, and international projects.

The association is a partner of Stowarzyszenie AVEC (AVEC association) in carrying out the promotion of the @ktywny Senior project as a good practice; it participates in the Lifelong Learning Programme constituting a part of the Grundtvig "Seniors' integration through education" programme organised by the European Union as well as the "Grants 2010" competition announced for the members of the Stowarzyszenie Zdrowych Miast Polskich (association of healthy Polish cities).

III. University of the Third Age at the University of Wrocław



Uniwersytet
Wrocławski

Uniwersytet
Trzeciego
Wieku

The University of the Third Age cooperates with the Wrocław Medical University and the University School of Physical Education in Wrocław in the area of medicine and physical activity of seniors, as well as with numerous other organisations and institutions whose aim is the dissemination of the activation of seniors, such as the Institute of Pedagogics of the University of Wrocław, the Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa Dolnośląskiego (the marshal Office of the Lower Silesian voivodship), primary schools, local politicians, the interdisciplinary science club "Variograf" and the AVEC association.

The life of the students is organised by the self-government which maintains contact with the managing board of the U3A and consults the most important decisions with it. Anyone over 60 years of age who is not professionally active (the retired, the beneficiaries of social assistance) can become a student of the University of the Third Age, regardless of the level of education, if only there are free places available. One can remain a student for many years. The student recruitment process confirming a participation in the classes in the consecutive academic year takes place in the second half of September. Owners of the U3A student cards have the places reserved for them. In the academic year 2003/2004 550 people signed up and 30 joined after the preliminary interviews. In 2006/2007 there were approximately 2 people for each place available (about 60 people were admitted), in the year 2007/2008 about 3 candidates for each place (about 100 students were admitted), 75 people were admitted for the academic year 2008/2009, and about 80 joined the year 2009/2010. Currently the U3A has 750 students. Since 2008 the U3A has been active on an international scale, and since 2007 it has been a member of the European Federation of Older Students, in 2008 close relationships with the Senior Councils of Hanover and Wolfsburg were established, and the year 2010 marked the beginning of two projects – starting a U3A in Lviv (in cooperation of the managing boards of the local higher schools – the university of technology, the higher music school, the public university, the Roman Catholic university, the physical education university) and the university of the golden age in Grodno¹⁾.

IV. Stowarzyszenie AVEC (AVEC Association)



Stowarzyszenie AVEC is an association of young scientists who organise educational projects aimed at diverse social groups and support student initiatives, in the broad sense of the term. It was established as a reaction to the student initiative consisting in organising holiday recreation for children from the Kłobuck orphanage. Students of the Institute of Pedagogics at the University of Wrocław were full of energy and enthusiasm, but they lacked an organisational and legal form necessary to allow them to be active. Many of them realised their scientific interests as members of the interdisciplinary science club "Variograf"; however, with graduation it became obligatory for them to cease their formal participation in "Variograf". Therefore,

¹⁾ <http://www.utw.wroclaw.pl/index.php?q=node/10>, retrieved: 07.06.2011.

a decision was made to shape the real world according to our needs and to create a community that could transgress the limits of the university without losing its scientific and research-oriented character.

The aims of the AVEC association are first and foremost a broad activity in promotion and dissemination of the idea of lifelong learning and improving the quality of life of local communities. Actions are undertaken to promote employment and to reduce the effects of unemployment. The aim of the association is the activation of social groups, help and support for the families at risk of social exclusion and marginalisation.

AVEC also supports seniors in order to improve the quality of their participation in the society. The developed programme of education of seniors allows them to become aware of their value and usefulness in contemporary society.

With promotion of science in mind, the AVEC association supports the scientific activity of students and graduates, allowing them to acquire practical knowledge and skills related to the functioning of non-governmental organisations, and provides opportunities of cooperation in numerous projects. The association organises student traineeships in adult education and the organisation of education and regional education.

The aims of the AVEC association are implemented on the basis of the participation in meetings, workshops, and conferences. It is made possible for the interested to take part in all forms of individual development related to the activity of the association.

Currently the AVEC association cooperates with the University of the Third Age at the University of Wrocław, the „Aktywny Senior” foundation (formerly the „Nova-Med” association), the „Umbrella” foundation and the Centrum Sektor 3.

V. Centrum Medyczne (medical centre) Wejherowska



Centrum Medyczne (medical centre) Wejherowska is one of the three medical centres constituting the NZOZ (non-public health care facility) „Zawidawie”. It provides general and specialist care for patients of the Fabryczna district of Wrocław, mainly from the areas of Popowice, Kozanów, Gądów, and Kosmonautów.

The NZOZ „Zawidawie” had been developing its activity in Wrocław for the last ten years, also in the Psie Pole district and Osiedle Zakrzów. It provides its patients with medical care of high standard. A wide range of medical services is provided in its centres – from diagnostic examinations, through occupational

medicine, consultations with GPs and specialists, prophylactic examinations, ambulance services, dentist practices and endoscopy. Its medical staff is highly qualified, friendly and open to the needs of the patients.

VI. Fundacja Aktywny Senior (Aktywny Senior Foundation)



Fundacja Aktywny Senior (Aktywny Senior Foundation) was established in June this year in order to fulfil the needs of the ageing society. The Aktywny Senior foundation „took over” this area that was formerly developed by Ogólnopolskie Stowarzyszenie Na Rzecz Rozwoju Otwartej Opieki Zdrowotnej „Nova-Med” (the Polish association for the development of open healthcare “Nova Med”). The aims of the foundation, such as promotion of continued education of professionally active people, support of economic development – including entrepreneurship – supporting the development of local communities, and promotion and organisation of voluntary work could not be contained in the statutory aims of that association. That is why a new entity was established; a one aimed at the activation of adults, in the broad sense of the term, with professional activation as its essential element, promotion and organisation of voluntary work and improvement of the quality of life. The formerly formed methods of work will be a part of the activities of the foundation; these were based on cooperation with the University of Wrocław, the Wrocław Medical University, the University School of Physical Education in Wrocław, Wrocław University of Environmental and Life Sciences, and non-governmental organisations such as the „Umbrella” foundation, the AVEC association, and the CEBS association. This model of partnership allowed for the implementation of the pilot project which resulted in the development of the programme of the *@ktywny Senior*. It was organised in the borough centre for non-governmental organisations in Wrocław understood as cooperation with government institutions. The total cost of the project was 73,333 PLN. As good practice, it was granted the support of the Grundtvig “Seniors’ integration through education” programme and was realised in cooperation with 5 European members of the CEBS association and the Aktywny Senior foundation. The programme of the *@ktywny Senior* project was used in the „Grants 2010” competition announced for the members of the Stowarzyszenie Zdrowych Miast Polskich (association of healthy Polish cities) as the Wrocław educational programme titled “Przestrzeń miejska przyjazna dla zdrowia mieszkańców” (city space beneficial to the health of its inhabitants). The total cost of the project was 22,940 PLN with a 3,000 PLN grant from the Stowarzyszenie Zdrowych Miast Polskich.