



Quality Ageing in an Urban Environment

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**CENTRAL
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THOMAS KLIE

Editorial Interview

Thomas Klie, Head of Institute of Centre for Developments in Civil Society/ Zentrum für zivilgesellschaftliche Entwicklung (ZZE)

Tell us about you...

I am a Professor of Law, Administration Science and Gerontology at the Protestant University in Freiburg holding a lectureship at the Alpen-Adria Universität Klagenfurt in Austria. The topic of civil society in Germany and in other countries and questions concerning social gerontology are at the centre of my research activities.

... and your work at the Centre for Developments in Civil Society?

I have been heading the institute of the Zentrum für zivilgesellschaftliche Entwicklung (ZZE)/ Centre for developments in civil society and its 13 employees for the past 15 years. The institute is third-party funded and carries out activities in fundamental research and in applied research. It has gathered a longstanding experience in the consultation of municipalities, associations and state bodies like the German "Länders" in topics like volunteering, welfare-mix, citizen participation and shaping of demographic change. My management and research activities at zze are an expression of a civil societal attitude and I have a strong interest in an analytical and also strategic debate about questions concerning civil society, since this is an approach in many hopes are pinned on for the next decades.

What is the main problem and challenge for Europe, including Germany in the field of aging population? What impacts of are to be expected in terms of economy and social developments?

The number of elderly people rises in the whole Europe, both in absolute numbers as well as in proportion to the population. Individual life expectancy increases. Imaginaries of age, which guide us individually and collectively are not adequate any longer and require differentiation. The notion of "retirement" is not acceptable, neither from a gerontology perspective nor from a societal approach. We have to take into account the opportunities given by age and ageing and to enhance a self- and jointly responsible lifestyle. Participation and inclusion of elderly citizens will be a main task for the next decades. However, vulnerable aspects of age shall not be neglected. The humanity of our societies is also rated in how people depending on support are handled. Dealing with very old-aged people is insofar one of the cultural challenges in Europe.

Are there recent/current projects with relevance to the Q-AGEING project, such as volunteering for elder people, in which the Centre is participating to? What are the Centre's activities/action plans for the promotion of active ageing?

In the past and present we have evaluated many projects that are related to the topics of Q-ageing: the national programme on active ageing, which we have been evaluating for several years, an intergenerational voluntary service, which focuses on elderly people and participatory planning for senior citizens. Apart from these we have consulted and evaluated intergenerational volunteer projects which deal with the civil society's approach of dementia: every municipality has to undertake activities to offer people with dementia a place within society and not to institutionalise them.

Also the topic of transition from work-life to post-professional life is a topic that ZZE has dealt with in the past years. We are not only concentrating on active ageing in Germany but also on international level: I had the opportunity to take up a project on "Ageing in Namibia" in 2010, in which various forms of participation of elderly people and a self-responsible and independent lifestyle were investigated into.

What is the major challenge to take for the promotion of active ageing or volunteering for seniors? Please give some examples of good practices proven in the Lander/Germany to be shared on a European level.

The biggest challenges are our imaginaries of age. Our personal images of and expectation from elderly people and our own ageing-process do not fit together with a participative attitude and the motto of "Active Ageing". Many elderly people do not feel confident to learn something new although learning never ends, which is something that is taken into account in the concept of "lifelong-learning".

This partly has to do with framework conditions, especially when it comes to addressing elderly people that do not belong to the typical middle class oriented group of volunteers e.g. people with a migratory background or people with a low-level education. They have to be taken into account in a special way. We have made good experience with the programme "Active Ageing" which has combined guiding principles, participatory methods and very concrete projects. With a low investment of funds a high participatory effect has been reached in 175 municipalities in Germany. Europe can profit from that project and its approach.

What are you expecting from the "European Year for Active Ageing" in 2012? How will the Centre be associated to the related awareness raising campaigns throughout next year?

We hope that the European Year on Active Ageing will be able to make a contribution to fostering more differentiated image of age and encouraging elderly people to make use of the potentials of age. We will take part in activities on a local and national level but also contribute to different European-wide activities. We especially will highlight the importance of volunteering of elderly people for civil society. This will be a key topic at the National Conference of Senior Citizens in 2012.

2011-2012 – European years of solidarity Intergenerational cooperation: a catalyst of Volunteering & Active Ageing for the benefit of the whole society



European Year for **Active Ageing**
and **Solidarity between Generations 2012**



2012 is the European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. A chance for all of us to reflect on how Europeans are living longer and staying healthier than ever before and to realise the opportunities that represents.

Population ageing is a phenomenon in which there is a rising share of older people and a falling overall population. This is not a disaster waiting to happen, in fact it is offering us new opportunities to find new ways to continue to live together and continue to prosper. Public policies and practices shall challenge and be reviewed collectively with regards to urban planning, rural development, public transport, access to health care, family policy, education and training, social protection, employment, civic participation, leisure, etc.

Ageing takes place within the context of friends, work associates, neighbours and family members. This is why interdependence as well as intergenerational solidarity are important tenets of active ageing: all generations shall be able to continue supporting each other and live together in a well-balanced way. As a result a new social coherence will have to be found in a society in which younger and older people live well and productively with each other.

From the mechanism of intergenerational solidarity, active ageing and volunteering are strongly connected. By contributing to the improvement of the quality of life and of services in many sectors of the society, volunteering, via its multiple manifestations (befriending, gardening, reading, assisting for the disabled, etc.) prevents social exclusion and strengthens solidarity between generations. After a European Year of "Volunteering" in 2011, the continuing EU-wide solidarity embraces the upcoming year, which will be dedicated to "Active Ageing & Solidarity Between Generations". Many events, exhibitions, live demonstrations and other activities take place throughout Europe during the year.

2012 will also be the 10th Anniversary of the United Nations Action Plan on Ageing. Active Ageing is defined by the World Health Organization as the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age. In a response to the UN's policy framework, the EY wishes to enable older people to take an active role in society by promoting:

- active ageing in employment (stay in the workforce and share their experience)
- active ageing in the community through volunteering and caring
- healthy ageing and independent living
- solidarity between generations in order to create a society for all ages

The European Year collects a list of initiatives, best practices, showing the most tangible ways of dealing with active ageing and examples of intergenerational solidarity, to encourage all policymakers and stakeholders to set themselves goals and take action to meet them. For more information on the EY2012:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/ey2012.jsp?langId=en>

Also, please read interesting links and information available on the AGE Platform's website:
<http://www.age-platform.eu/en/age-policy-work/employment-and-active-ageing>



FREIBURG

Report

Pilot activities and Road show event from Zentrum für zivilgesellschaftliche Entwicklung (ZZE)/ Centre for Developments in Civil Society in Freiburg (Germany)

Q-AGEING German partner, ZZE, has implemented two pilot projects including manifold activities. Pilot activities have been carried out in one district of Karlsruhe, which has a high percentage of unemployed people, migrants and elderly citizens compared to other districts in the city.

Mühlburg's and Karlsruhe's good examples of intergenerational cooperation

Fostering elderly employees was one of the aims that we have pursued with Q-AGEING. We have carried out a case-study in one local company in the baking trade on the situation of elderly employees and the attitudes towards them by all employees. The results have shown that elderly employees are highly appreciated by all age groups. Problems within the company were rather noticed concerning younger and partly less motivated employees. Generally, there is a good and intense intergenerational cooperation between young and old: Whereas younger employees sometimes relieve



elderly colleagues from carrying heavy loads, elderly employees willingly share their expertise with the younger colleagues. The results of this study were presented in Germany and also at an international conference in Slovenia.

In order to reach a wider public a national conference on the topic of transition from working-life to post-professional life was held in Karlsruhe in cooperation with a German company. More than 70 participants attended the conference, and discussed intensely what implications demographic change has for the job market and how upcoming developments can be dealt with.

Think Age positive!

In order to generate awareness on ageing, a series of talks and discussions has been set up in the two cities. District dwellers were invited to a meeting at which the Q-Ageing project has been introduced. Participants were questioned on topics they would welcome during the event series called "Mühlburger Gespräche". Amongst many others, the selected topics were: housing and housing environments for elderly people,



KARLSRUHE

elderly employees and the job market, volunteering as a way to contribute to the community and get something in return.

Since ZZE was planning to investigate into the topic of ageing under a more scientific angle, a representative survey on the theme “quality of life, imaginaries of age and volunteering” was carried out amongst Mühlburg citizens aged between 65 and 85. This survey was of interest, because at the moment there is hardly any empirical data available on these issues in Germany. The survey shows a clear linkage between the positive perception of ageing, the positive attitudes towards volunteering and the contentment with the financial situation. In contrast, negative perceptions of ageing are linked to discontentment with the financial situation and to lack of social contacts.

Photo showroom “Age and ageing in Mühlburg”: when the image talks

How do youths, adults and elderly people perceive age and ageing? In order to collect visible impressions on the likewise abstract topic of imaginaries of age, ZEE organised a photo contest in Mühlburg as a conclusive and special event, targeted to district residents on the topic of “Age & Ageing in the district of Mühlburg”. Combined with the road show, ZEE wished to raise more attention towards the wider. For this purpose, the Centrum decided to get a stock of single-use cameras and to distribute them amongst Mühlburg’s residents. Anyone interested could get a camera, take pictures and then send the camera back to us for development. We have selected the best photographs from each camera, so that everyone could be represented at the exhibition.



The Road show event’s inaugural introduced Q-AGEING’s activities, presented the comics from the other partners and held a short lecture on the topic of “imaginaries of age” by the Head of the Seniors residents’ office of Karlsruhe and the photographs were presented to the public for the first time. The expo was well visited throughout the three hours opening and the event succeeded in a large press coverage. Visitors were invited to participate to the poll for the best photographs in the category portraits, nature & architecture or details. At the moment, the photographs are being showed at a community centre in Mühlburg.

ELDBicycle: a prototype realized in co-operation with P-Factor (www.pfactor.it) in order to enable elderly people with little mobility problems to spend more time in "open air" in an environment-friendly way. It is about an electric bicycle pulling a "risciò" hosting 2 people, sited each in front of the other, in order to favour socialization and conversation. The two seats are protected from rain and wind while a photovoltaic panel on the top provides energy for the battery of the bicycle. ELDBicycle is homologised to be driven in vehicle's ways and not only in "cycling roads". Two prototypes have been realized and more than 100 elderly people tested it during the experimentation in two Elderly Care Houses in Treviso city.

TVBus: through the implementation of the "on call" transportation service named TVBus, Treviso Province in collaboration with Vision snc (www.consorziovision.it) delivered a free transportation service for elderly people (over 65) in disadvantaged areas (15 hillside & mountain small municipalities) over a period of 4 months. This service had been used by 276 seniors: some of them (69%) for health problems while others (31%) for social reasons. This pilot is perceived as an "innovative" service as, first of all, it is completely free of charge for its beneficiaries and secondly it offers the opportunity for seniors to directly call the transportation service from home (with no intermediation) and for free (green number). The service is delivered with care to passengers' safety, with professional drivers and well-equipped fleet of minibuses.

News

Treviso is in the leading pack for sustainable elder mobility



"ELDBicycle" and "TVBus" pilots offer the senior population accessibility in the Northern Italian Province

After a first period dedicated to knowledge improvement, characterized by a series of surveys and researches carried out by experts and local operators and presented during the International Event held in the city centre of Treviso in October 2009, the action of the Province in the framework of the Q-AGEING Project turned into more concrete initiatives. Following the results of the above mentioned researches and thanks to interesting suggestions of the Strategic Regional Platform composed by a group of some 20 local stakeholders, the experimentation of three pilot actions started in

September 2010 and ended in February-March 2011.

References pilot actions aim to favour more sustainable and efficient mobility for elderly people in Treviso province territory, as well as to promote an innovative culture among the Treviso population, a culture that considers elderly people as a resource for the whole community and not only a problem to take care of.

School blues at 60+

Trevor & Ermes: Treviso Province, with the support of Treviso Tecnologia (www.tvtecnologia.it), launched Trevor & Ermes Pilot Project in October 2010 to valorise the competences and skills of elderly people willing to share and transfer their knowledge to the community.

To prepare ahead, a training experience for "Over 60" population took place. The 1st Training Experience's (ERMES) objective is to provide a training path to those who have a significant working experience, who can be oriented towards a new professional career of trainer or expert to teach and transfers skills. 2nd Training Experience = TREVOR. The programme's objectives are multiple: make



volunteers aware of their role in organizations and support their motivation; provide “technical” skills and relational competences to stimulate and support active ageing of seniors; offer skills for management of possible volunteer projects or give support to voluntary organizations; provide competences to manage relationships inside and outside the territorial associations and build networks.

Apart from the scheduled implementation, “ERMES & TREVOR” pilot project generated an extremely interesting “follow up”, financed directly by Treviso Province with its own funds: replication of the “ERMES & TREVOR” path in order to widen the number of skilled seniors willing to share the experience and to join the group; creation of a Q AGEING Bank of Competences of “Over 60” population; and creation of the Q AGEING Front Office.

Accessibility for seniors

Poland’s “Summer Capital” welcomed its Central European partners on a study tour showing local pilots on accessibility and 3rd Age University.

The visit, organized on 7-8 March 2011, in the frame of the Q-AGEING project, was hosted by the Municipality of Poland’s Baltic’ shore city Sopot, a high reputation sea resort, also known for its quality of life and clean environment. With its qualities to live in, Sopot is not only attracting tourists but also a high number of elder people, whose population has always been constantly increasing. Due to the demographical tendencies, the Municipality wishes to assist its seniors and adapt the urban environment to their needs.

As a partner of the Q-Ageing project, Sopot has a strong commitment to engage a senior-friendly policy by improving its municipal services for the elderly and disabled and to develop its institutional framework in this direction. As a special policy, the city aims to remove the factors representing obstacles and enhance accessibility for the target population. In cooperation with a local NGO, the city worked out an “accessibility map” on the basis of a questionnaire. The elder and impaired population was questioned on the physical accessibility of hundreds of spots (bus stops, crossroads, public places, institutions, etc.). An accessibility database and plan has been established upon. The city wishes to take into account the information collected for guiding future investments, and as such create a tool for upcoming decisions on city planning.

Partners taking part in the study visit suggested the Municipality to release the tool for public consultation and to also collect further information on “mental obstacles” to complete the database. Also, the communication of this pilot currently targeting seniors and impaired should also be directed towards mothers with children.

Central European partner cities also experienced Sopot’s 3rd Age University project. Some 300 similar institutions work all over Poland and are mostly financed by local governments. Hosted within the walls of the Sopot’s municipality, courses for seniors (IT, languages, history of art and handcrafts as well as some useful services i.e.: travel information, etc.) are delivered by volunteers and students. Amongst the Q-Ageing project partners, Slovenia has similar pilots, recognized on a State level, but fully financed by public funds.



SOPOT

Events



TREVISO

Q Ageing Road-Show on Active Ageing in Treviso Province: From Europe to Local Territories (28 June 2011)

The continuous ageing of European Population is a real challenge. How and what local authorities learn from European experiences? 2012 is the European Year of Active Ageing.

Local authorities are aware of the importance of implementing sound and effective strategies able to face the continuous ageing of the population but, at the same time, they perfectly know that the solutions could be found also by means of a productive best practices exchange at European and National level. For this reason, in the framework of the Q-Ageing Project, Treviso Province organized a Road Show for European, national and local stakeholders, in June 2011 in Sant'Artemio Park. The event was organised in view of the "2012 European year of Active Ageing". During the conference, specific session was dedicated to other EU and National project dealing with demographic change implemented at local level in order to create synergies among them. During the Conference, the new 3 minutes promotional video "Over 60 – Over the Top", realized by the Province and focusing on the local results of the experimentation, was broadcasted.



ÚJBUDA

Final conference (19 October 2011)

The Q-Ageing project is approaching its end. In October 2011, the partnership will hold its closing ceremony and dissemination event, in Budapest Hungary.

The Lead partner, Ujbuda Municipality will be hosting the event. Partners will present the Q-Ageing "toolbox" they have developed in the course of their thorough cooperation. Commissionaire Máire Geoghegan-Quinn for Research, Innovation and Science and Commissionaire László Andor responsible for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion will be invited aside representatives European network of organisations for people aged 50+, "AGE" Platform and representatives from the Central Europe Programme Authorities. The project's last Newsletter (6th edition) will be released connected to the final conference (October 2011).