

Grundtvig Senior Volunteering Project



Education and Culture
Lifelong learning programme



BIKES AND FRIENDS

The Fullness-of-Life Academy Association
Cracow – Poland



The Fullness-Of-Life Academy is an NGO acting on the field of seniors' education.



- Our goal is to improve the quality of seniors' life by creating a wide range of educational opportunities tailored for them.
- We also try to activate the elderly by involving them in various initiatives, including international projects.



Bikes and Friends

01/08/2011 - 31/07/2013



Our partner:

ANBO – an NGO acting in support of senior citizens in the Netherlands



The main topic of the project is promoting the bike as a means of transport and recreation and also as a “pretext” for education and international exchange between seniors.





- 3 volunteering visits in each organization
- 6 volunteers from each country
- additional activities between visits

long preparatory phase:

- to establish a cooperation between our organizations,
- to organize some events for seniors, such as presentations about our countries and regions, a photo competition “The bike of my country” and so on,
- to prepare the volunteers for their tasks





In both countries the volunteers will be engaged in three kinds of work:

1. helping in the activities and daily work of the host organizations;
2. co-organizing and co-running a special training and events for seniors from the host organization, like for instance Internet communication classes, language classes, special bike tours;
3. working for the local community, like for instance inspecting the cycling paths in Krakow, visiting Polish emigrant families in Flevoland , or even for European seniors by designing bike tours for seniors, from the perspective of elderly foreign tourists.





There are a few matters to be considered:

1. what kind of tasks the volunteers are to perform and what kind of skills and knowledge they need to succeed
2. what is the motivation of the volunteers to go to another country and work, and how we can strengthen it
3. what kind of personal and social skills do they need to feel well in sometimes completely different circumstances and to be able to use support and help which will be provided for them
4. how to enhance and facilitate the learning process which will be performed in both directions between the volunteers and their hosts.

We also have to take into consideration the specificity of learning in later life and of volunteering as social phenomena, in each country.



- Each period of life creates different reasons and different motivations for learning.
- Getting older we lose the strongest reason for learning – our career and professional development. We may lose our identity, our sense of life.
- To find motivation for undertaking the effort of learning in later life become quite challenging.

Taking part in the international projects like the Seniors Volunteering project creates a great, self-pushing up motivation for learning for seniors.





The older generation is very concrete: they like to know precisely why and how to do things.

Our seniors, who are going to be volunteers in the Netherlands, want to know everything about the country, region, people, habits, what exactly they should do there, how to communicate and so on, and so forth...

The answer for one question arises another question.

ALL WE HAVE TO DO, IS TO USE AND SUPPORT THIS PROCESS!



In the preparatory phase:

- Engaging seniors in the recruitment procedure, preparing materials for the project, organizing meetings and events for seniors
- English classes on two levels: regular classes and conversation with foreigners
- Meeting with Dutch gentlemen – to learn about the Netherlands: daily life, habits, tradition, politeness, culture, mentality, legal issues, safety, some social and political issues, climate and weather conditions, traffic and transportation systems, food, drinks etc., etc., etc
- Involving seniors in organizing volunteering visits for their peers from and the partner country, discussing all details



And we have to start promoting cycling among seniors.....



Polish bikers



Dutch bikers



well thought out and well organized formal and particularly non-formal learning during the preparatory phase to volunteering is not only the key to the success of the project but also the engine which makes it go

