



REPORT

The meeting of NORDPLUS ADULT project

„Feel Better with a Book: Reading for Wellbeing in Old Age“

NOVEMBER 14-20, 2016

VILNIUS, LITHUANIA

At 2016 November 14-19th project partners – Central Library of Vilnius City Municipality organized the second meeting of project “Feel Better with a Book: Reading for Wellbeing in Old Age” participants in Vilnius (Lithuania).

Program of the meeting organized according to main aims of project and was for better understanding of services for seniors in Lithuania including library services for elder people and for bibliotherapy as a method of wellbeing in Old Age.

Project participants from Sweden, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania arrived to Vilnius at 14th of November 2016. Participants accommodated at a hotel “Ecotel”. First meeting and discussion of project activities in Vilnius arranged for dinnertime. Participants together were acquainted with a visit schedule.

On **15th of November** project group visited the Office of the President of the Republic of Lithuania and had short excursion at the Center for Civil Education – received some knowledge about Lithuania past and present, political system, education and lifelong learning possibilities in Lithuania. After project group had a visit to the **Social center “Home of St. Cross”** (<http://www.vargdieniu.lt/kontaktai/sv-kryziaus-namai/sv-kryziaus-namu-socialinis-centras>) , where were presented activities for seniors: foreign languages learning groups, self-help groups when seniors volunteers help homeless people prepare activities for wellbeing as excursions or traveling together. As “Home of St. Cross” is under leadership of Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary there are organized religious activities for seniors and one of them – reading group where group members together read Holy Bible and discuss and investigate texts together. Project group and organizers of activities at “Home of St. Cross” discussed reading in a group benefit for better understanding of readers’ issues and self-help when text compared with present life situations. The same day project group visited **Fabijoniškės social services center** - municipal institution for social services to elder people (<http://www.senoliai.lt>). For project group were presented activities for elder people - reading in a group. This method at social services center use for communication with elder persons who have dementia indications. Social center workers showed premises of center and project group members had possibility to communicate to center visitors and ask about reading in-group use. On “round-table” discussion, project group members and social center workers discussed about social situation in Lithuania and lifelong learning and education programs for seniors shared experience about reading in groups and bibliotherapy use.

November 16th project participants visited **Order of Malta Relief Organization** in Lithuania (<http://maltieciai.lt/mro/>). For us presented video movie about “Meel on Wheels project” - one of the oldest maltesers’ projects, which has been running since 1993. Every day the maltesers deliver warm food, which is symbolically called the soup to the homes of ill and lonely elderly people. In the meantime the “Meals on Wheels” project is implemented in 17 cities in Lithuania and its scale is impressive – more than 100 000 portions of warm meals had been delivered to the homes of the elderly in 2015. Also we had discussion about Malta Relief Organization volunteers who visit elder people at home and read to them. Trained volunteers take care of elders who can hardly move because of illnesses or age and can not take care of themselves. They provide such kind of services: communication, including reading, household chores, food acquisition, cooking, bills payment, regular Health monitoring, etc. With representatives of Order of Malta Relief Organization in Lithuania project group considered about possibility to have more joint activities among Malta Order organisations and public libraries also other social institutions in a field of better communication with lonely elder people using methods of group reading and bibliotherapy. Those joint activities could be new approach seeking to help elder people learn new “self-help” methods. The same day project group visited **National Martynas Mažvydas Library of Lithuania** (<http://www.lnb.lt/>). Library building opened after renovation and project group had a short excursion in a library after in a meeting room discussion with deputy director Vytautas Plioplys about library services and events for elder people about and how important is reading in all age groups how librarians can use new reading promotion activities and at the same to educate libraries visitors to solve psychosocial issues via reading in groups or on bibliotherapy sessions.

November 16th project group participants visited **Lithuania pensioners’ union „Bočiai“** (<http://www.vilniausbociai.lt/>) – at the meeting representatives of „Bočiai“ union gave a concert and presented activities of union members – at round table discussion with „Bočiai“ members (at the meeting participated 30 persons) project group narrated about institutions where they work and talked about importance of partnership among organisation seeking for joint activities especially solving psychosocial issues of elder people. Project group members shared their experience at work with seniors presented use of reading groups or bibliotherapy groups suggested to participate in joint projects and to develop services for elder people at state, municipal and non-governmental institutions using experience of Sweden, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania at this field.

November 17th – project group participated at the presentation of bibliotherapy program for adults and at the presentation of project „An Island of Frankness in a library”(project presented by psychologists Veronika Mudėnaitė – Savickienė and Raminta Seniūnaitė). Presentations were at the Vilnius Municipality Central Library’s Naujoji Vilnia branch library (www.vcb.lt ; <https://www.facebook.com/Naujosios-Vilnios-biblioteka-490501611109089/>). After presentations project group participated at bibliotherapy workshop where with librarians and psychologists used bibliotherapy methods for adults on purpose to prepare after methodology for elder persons for self-help and wellbeing. Workshop took few hours and after it for project participants were presented Naujoji Vilnia Library’s projects and activities for adults and seniors. Discussions about bibliotherapy methods took place again after presentations. Also project group tried to use tool – bibliotherapy virtual game – online.

November 18th participants of project group visited Medardas Čobotas Third Age University (www.mctau.lt) and discussed with university rector about activities for seniors as studies at faculties of: history, culture, information technologies, music, arts, politics, law, health, tourism, languages. For now about 500 seniors attend studies at university and participate on various events organized by university. Many activities include reading and discussions about using books as “tools” for solving personal problems sharing emotions and reflections about read texts. Project group shared experience with university rector and lecturers about Third Age universities at

their countries and discussed about possibility to prepare joint projects for adult's non-formal education and reading methods using for wellbeing.

After lunch project group visited Central Library of Vilnius city municipality (www.vcb.lt) where were presented projects and activities for seniors: Lithuanian language courses for non-native adult speakers, exhibitions of senior residents of Lazdynai area, social gatherings. Clubs for older adults: "The Inspiration" (Kalvarijos branch library). Club goals: promote the employment of older workers; encourage active lifestyle; uphold meaningful communication; reduce loneliness, confinement, isolation from society. Club activities include: literary afternoon; themed evenings; Lectures; discussions and meetings with various litterateurs (poets, writers, journalists, etc.). "The Bliss" (Justiniškės branch library) club goals: provide an opportunity for community members to meet and interact; form a space to create and share experiences, knowledge and skills; enable active and meaningful leisure; promote a healthy lifestyle for themselves and others; help in a difficult situation. Club activities include: preparation of regular club meetings operational initiatives, meetings; organize creative evenings, educational activities, exhibitions and other events; recreation and employment organization. "The Spring" (Central library): club goals are to bring together community seniors, allowing them to find an interesting and meaningful way to spend their time. Club activities include: themed evenings, lectures, meetings, literary and musical afternoons. "To live is not to breathe but to act. The man who has lived the most is not he who has counted the most years but he who has most felt life." – a quote by Jean Jacques Rousseau. These words exactly inspired the name of the club – "The Spring". It is a place, where the water spurts; Senior club is a place, where you can gain knowledge, share opinions and communicate. Why was it established in a library, you may ask. It is because library is open and friendly to people of all age. The club is open to all the community of seniors and library visitors.

On **November 19th** project participants visited Druskininkai Public Library (<http://www.bibliotekadruskininkai.lt/en/>) where for project groups were presented computer skills courses for elder people in Druskininkai area also activities and events for seniors including reading groups and promotion of reading at local spa and rehabs (Druskininkai is a resort with many spa and rehabs). For project group librarians presented website Vilnijos vartai (<http://www.vilnijosvartai.lt/en/>) : aimed at the dissemination of information on local history of Vilnius County libraries on the internet. The objective of the website is to reveal to the society, a remote user (Lithuanians abroad, students, everyone, who is interested in Vilnija), concentrated, systemized, and selected information of enduring value based on bibliographical lists about Vilnius County – a region with dramatic history, rich material and spiritual culture, as well as distinctive traditions. Though the internet is full of diverse information on local cultural heritage, it is not always reliable, as it is often does not have any reference to the sources. The information on local history is really in high demand: people show interest in the history of Vilnija region as well as cultural heritage, merits, and memorialization of people – relatives and families. Druskininkai library prepared training course for elder persons how to use website "Vilnijos vartai" and how to find and use information of website.

After lunch project group visited Grūtas Park – museum of Soviet occupation time in Lithuania and for group were presented educational programs for adults http://grutoparkas.lt/en_US/about-us/.

On **November 20th** after the meeting evaluation discussion all participants departure home.

Project activities in Vilnius empowered group members for more communication and discussions how to use reading and bibliotherapy methods at non-formal education of elder persons on purpose to teach seniors how to use reading for wellbeing.

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