
VELENJE

Annual report for 2011

Velenje, an old Slovenian town, became a modern city after the Second World War. As such it has been a symbol of youth although now its baby-boom inhabitants turned to seniors and the structure of city population became comparable to any other city in Slovenia. Today, it is the fifth largest Slovenian city, a clean, neat place to live. As one of the pioneer Age-friendly cities, it became a member of the Slovenian Network of Age-friendly Environments in 2009 and from that time on it has been the most active in age-friendly activities among all members of the network. Its age-friendly efficiency is based on active, goodwill participation of the city mayor with municipality at one and the responsible seniors' committee at the other side. Their joint activities maintain mutual, long-lasting interest in city friendliness for all its inhabitants.

Next to the municipality, the senior committee collaborates with all city stakeholders: social and city services, police, tourist organizations, banks, railway, health care, pharmacies and others. They are discussing their positive suggestions by defining, what is feasible to do, what not and why. Information about realized proposals is communicated to the whole city.

The year of 2011 was rather busy for Velenje. A **guide on city's social services**, devoted to the elderly city-dwellers was published. It contains useful information about different social procedures, associations of pensioners, where to ask for help and whom to talk to in case of need. An additional **poster** with basic guide-information was printed and presented at public places and institutions.

Since 2010, an intergenerational meeting place, called **Centre for the elderly** has been in preparation. On the basis of results from a questionnaire from 2011, various activities will be at visitors disposal: meetings, chats, care, working occupations, cooking according to "grandma" recipes, reading, memory trainings, communication, turning, care for health, personal care, social assistance, counselling, self-care, occasional performances, different lectures either by visitors themselves or invited speakers etc, together with promotion of older citizens' rights and legislative facts. All of this will be offered to other generations as well and in such a way that the intergenerational gap will possibly be bridged.

A **consulting room** for the elderly and the others, who need help, was opened in November 2011. The general aim of it is the improvement of the environment, in which people live by personal counselling in the case of distress, prevention of violence, social support and assistance. Local TV is regularly informing the public about its existence.

In April 2011 an **International intergenerational festival** was organized with the slogan "We are a community". In the frame of the European year of voluntary activities 2010 the main topic of the festival was "Voluntary work for all generations".

Environments

It offered a possibility of a constructive intergenerational dialog followed by intergenerational workshops with local scholars.

Health care is of special importance for the elderly and misunderstandings with healthcare workers are not rare. A meeting with health-care management was organized, comments discussed and proposals for better functioning adopted designed. There is an intention that such a meeting should take place once a year.

The senior committee visited to the pleasure of their dwellers all **homes for the elderly** in the city as well as in the neighbourhood. The strengths and weaknesses of their management were commonly discussed. They intend to inform the Slovenian Government about their views.

Additionally, well visited lectures, workshops and round tables were organized: *A safe usage of drugs; Is the longevity a civilization gain? How the City of Velenje intends to take care for its aged residents?* 800 elderly people were trained in handling with the Internet, and an intergenerational course in needlework took place as well, together with the regular annual meeting of the mayor, his staff and seniors with the representatives of Anton Trstenjak Institute, which coordinates activities in the Slovenian Network.

On the basis of performed work as well as existing experiences, the following dozen values of Age-friendly Velenje were defined:

- **An active belonging to the city, we all are Velenje;**
- **Instead of critical, goodwill suggestions;**
- **Intergenerational solidarity keeps us together;**
- **Safety of living in the city environments;**
- **The same level of accessibility for all;**
- **Common and private tidiness;**
- **Common and private responsibility;**
- **Kindness and good interpersonal relations;**
- **Simple and open information;**
- **Social responsibility;**
- **Sociability;**
- **Respect of tradition.**

The cited values will be included in the strategy of development and daily life practise of the City of Velenje.