



CREATIVITY, LIFELONG LEARNING AND THE AGEING POPULATION



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CREATIVITY, LIFELONG LEARNING AND THE AGEING POPULATION
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CONTENT

INTRODUCTION Henrik Zipsane, Margherita Sani	5
EDITORS' INTRODUCTION TO THIS VOLUME Sofia Kling, Jakoba Šraml González	9
AGEING AND WORK IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION: PROBLEMS AND REMEDIES Roland Kadefors	13
THE CHALLENGE OF AGEING POPULATIONS – ASSESSING THE CONTRIBUTION OF HERITAGE AND CREATIVE LEARNING Sara Grut	23
OLDER PEOPLE AS A DEVELOPING MARKET FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES Anna Hansen, Henrik Zipsane	35
EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF PARTICIPATORY ARTS ON OLDER PEOPLE: WHAT THE RESEARCH LITERATURE TELLS US Amy Woodhouse	43
CRAVING CREATIVITY IN LATER LIFE Tine Fristrup	56
CREATIVITY IN LATER LIFE: POSSIBILITIES FOR PERSONAL EMPOWERMENT Marvin Formosa	78
THE HOUSE OF MEMORY Henning Lindberg	94
MUSEUMS & MEMORIES – STIMULATING THE MEMORY AND ESTIMATING THE QUALITY OF LIFE Britt-Marie Borgström	102
VOLUNTEERS AND HERITAGE Anna Hansen	114

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INTRODUCTION

The developed world is experiencing a demographic change which is of high relevance for socioeconomic development and the livelihood in broadest sense. The European Union is no exception. The life expectancy at birth of EU citizens is bound to increase in the next 50 years by, in average, 7,9 years for men and 6,5 for women.¹ This will be accompanied by a slow population growth of 3,2 per cent annually (from 2010 till 2060). According to this prognosis, by 2060 the 65+ population will account for 29,5 per cent of the EU population and the 80+ population for 12 per cent.² The greying of the baby boomers brings two major implications. Firstly, the old age dependency ratio will grow. It is expected that in 2060 the ratio between the 65+ population and the 14–64 population will be 52,6 per cent, while in 2010 the ratio was 25,9 per cent.³ Secondly, the longer life expectancy does not mean that all years after 65 will be healthy. In average a 65-year-old female European older adult will have 8,8 healthy years ahead in comparison with a life expectancy of 21 years. A 65-year-old male European older adult will have 8,7 healthy years ahead in comparison with a life expectancy of 17,4 years.⁴ The gap between healthy years expectancy and total life expectancy is wide.

The demographic change with all its implications has been addressed by competent governing bodies at all levels. Action has been taken through the

¹ European Commission, “The 2012 Ageing Report: Underlying Assumptions and Projection Methodologies,” in *European Economy* (DG Economic and Financial Affairs, 2011).

² Eurostat Press Office, “Population projections 2010–2060. EU27 population is expected to peak by around 2040. One person in eight aged 80 or more in 2060,” *Eurostat News Release*, 8 June 2011 2011.

³ Ibid.

⁴ ———, “Health in the EU27 in 2010. At the age of 65, both women and men are expected to live a further 9 years in a healthy condition,” *Eurostat News Release*, 19 April 2012 2012.

reformation of labour and pension policies and also through the strengthening of the health care sector. However, there are still gaps or aspects that the official adaptations have not tackled. The objective of this anthology is to discuss different ways in which the heritage sector contributes to the tackling of this issue. Moreover, this anthology wishes to introduce the heritage sector as a unifying arena across Europe where good practices and experiences are shared, new and creative approaches developed and innovative research conducted.

Excellent examples from within the heritage sector show that heritage can have meaningful impacts in tackling the challenges outlined above: whether as an arena for lifelong learning or as a mean to alleviate the health of elderly people at least a little bit. Nevertheless, demographic developments in conjunction with new political agendas – in which the urgency of attention to demographic matters is constantly emphasised – calls for the heritage sector to modify its previous priorities regarding target groups in particular. Youths have been widely put forward as the main target group, both by the heritage sector itself and by policy makers and governing bodies. Some initiatives trying to tackle the issues of the ageing population have been made, though. For example, the year 2012 has been designated as the European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. These attempts, however, have been fairly isolated as the issue of the ageing of developed societies is still marginalised. The heritage sector is trying to make its breakthrough, but policies are not well defined, in many cases not even existing.

Heritage institutions and especially the museums as public institutions should be of benefit to all people. Heritage institutions and older adults are both keepers of memories and the relation between them should therefore be of a dynamic kind. Older adults have experiences – accumulated competences, skills and attitudes – which are of importance for the heritage sector. Older adults are thus resourceful to the heritage sector. But, as this anthology makes clear, the heritage sector can also be of importance for older adults in enhancing their capacity to remember and make sense of certain aspects of their life. In meeting with heritage, long forgotten memories may come to life and, sometimes, make important changes to how the individual interprets and structures his or her experiences from life. In this sense, both the heritage institutions and older adults can be regarded as learners. The heritage sector has to change in order to see older adults both as learners and as competent keepers of memories. The challenge is thus, not only on policy development to facilitate the meeting of museums and older adults, but also on changing attitudes among the heritage sector. These issues should be understood as opportunities and not as hindrances. Heritage institutions have much to offer older and to gain from older adults. Connecting life quality

improvement with understanding of the past is a realistic vision for museums, archives and other heritage institutions⁵

The anthology resumes the contributions from the key-note speakers and seminar leaders at the conference titled “Creativity, Lifelong Learning and the Ageing Population” organised by The Learning Museum Network (LEM) together with The European Association of Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning (EARLALL) and hosted by the Nordic Centre of Heritage Learning (NCK)⁶ and Jamtli museum. The conference was held in Östersund, Sweden, on October 11, 2012. LEM is a permanent network of museums and cultural heritage organisations which wishes to insure that they can play an active role with regard to lifelong learning and to raise awareness among decision makers at European level.⁷ EARLALL currently includes the co-operation of 23 regional and local authorities aiming to influence European policy and to co-operate in projects in the field of lifelong learning.⁸ The Nordic Centre of Heritage Learning (NCK) is a Nordic collaborative initiative for creative research and experimental method development within the field of cultural heritage learning. Through advanced cultural heritage learning, NCK aims to integrate Nordic cultural heritage into social development in a way that promotes lifelong learning, regional development and sustainable growth.⁹ Jamtli is the regional museum in Jämtland region.¹⁰

The conference aimed at responding to the above mentioned issues by gathering the perspective of the academic and the heritage sector. The result is an inspiring compendium to serve as the basis for future interactions and actions among the heritage sector aimed at tackling the issue of the ageing population.

⁵ Henrik Zipsane, “Heritage learning in service for the memories and life quality of senior citizens,” *International Journal of Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning* 3, no. 2 (2011).

⁶ Currently The Nordic Centre of Heritage Learning and Creativity AB (NCK)

⁷ See The Learning Museum, <http://www.lemproject.eu/>.

⁸ See The European Association of Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning (EARLALL), <http://www.earlall.eu>.

⁹ See Nordic Centre of Cultural Heritage Learning, <http://www.nckkultur.org/>.

¹⁰ See Jamtli, <http://www.jamtli.com/>.

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Sofia Kling and Jakoba Šraml González,
The Nordic Centre of Heritage Learning and Creativity (Eds.)

EDITORS' INTRODUCTION TO THIS VOLUME

The demographic scenario described by Margeritha Sani and Henrik Zipsane is complex and should be tackled from a multitude of perspectives. The challenge of the ageing population poses not only socio-economic challenges – resulting from a situation where too small cohorts of workers will have to support large, and ever growing cohorts of retirees – but also challenges which have more to do with the individual's need for a meaningful and rewarding pursuit. Decidedly, the first-mentioned perspective is important to a level where it cannot be ignored are we to maintain the welfare state such as we know it. This is the perspective most likely to shape future politics regarding for example pension systems, migration and reproduction, but it is less likely to be the perspective most relevant to people who, at the macro level, are called “elderlies”, “older adults”, and “seniors” but who, at the individual level, are called grandmothers, grandfathers and ageing but beloved parents. At the individual level other values – such as health, well-being and dignity – calls for our attention.

It is hardly surprising that increased life expectancy goes hand in hand with increased expectations regarding the actual quality of later life. Well-being and health – as personal experiences – should therefore be of crucial importance whenever the challenge of the ageing population is discussed. Society's offer to this particular group of community members must contain more than just care and physical accessibility. We should be cautious about depicting older adults as fragile and in need of care and acknowledge, first and foremost we should emphasize their individuality. Society's offer to older adults should include arenas and opportunities which support the continuation of personal development through the years of later life. In addition to this we must acknowledge that basic human needs, such as being part of socially and existentially meaningful contexts, always is of great importance for how health and well-being is perceived – by ourselves, but also by our parents, grandparents and great grandparents.

While considering this, concepts such as “lifelong learning”, “creativity” and “reminiscence” may gain new and unexpected meanings. New arenas, such as the cultural heritage sector, may step forward as relevant providers of learning experiences, creativity sessions and reminiscence work, making everyday life meaningful to persons who are no longer part of the work force. People who *may* suffer from the loss of a beloved partner, who *may* be economically deprived, physically fragile or suffering from diseases such as Alzheimer’s disease. But who may, just as well, be in good health and in search for opportunities to learn, be creative and develop one’s inner self.

This anthology aims at tackling the challenge of the ageing population from both of these perspectives. The first contributor, Roland Kadefors, describes a situation where higher labour force participation is necessary in order to maintain fundamental functions of the welfare system. His article, **Ageing and Work in the Baltic Sea Region: Problems and Remedies**, is based on the Best Agers project which tries not only to address the demographic problem in the Baltic Sea Region, but also to find remedies. The focus is on the resource that exists among older workers which could help alleviate the economic effects of demographic change but is not used due to several reasons. His contribution shows that the phenomenon of the ageing population is not just an over-repeated buzzword, but should be addressed properly as everyone’s concern. Europe’s governing bodies are trying to tackle the issue by implementing reforms and support actions; the outcome, however, is many times limited. It is therefore important that all sectors contribute.

With Sara Grut’s article, **The Challenge of Ageing Populations – Assessing the Contribution of Heritage and Creative Learning**, the focus changes from the mechanisms of the labour market to culture, and its claimed positive effects on the health and well-being of older adults. Grut’s article is derived from work performed by an international group of museum officials called “Museums and the ageing population” within the larger EU-funded project *The Learning Museum* which was introduced in the Introduction by Margherita Sani and Henrik Zipsane. In her article, Grut makes a case for the cultural heritage sector as important providers of learning and creativity to older adults. She concludes that cooperation of the heritage sector with other sectors is crucial in order to unleash the potential of heritage’s impact at individual, community and society levels. This perspective on the heritage sector is further developed by Anna Hansen and Henrik Zipsane in their article **Elderly as a Developing Market**. In their article, Hansen and Zipsane cover a wide number of ways in which groups of older adult can be invited and benefit from a visit to the museum. Hansen and Zipsane encourage heritage institutions to design programs specifically for this group, just as

the sector has done for children and young adults for decades already, and to further develop their role in society. Heritage institutions may be of great social and economical importance as providers of learning opportunities, social projects and commercial tourist attractions.

Amy Woodhouse and Tine Fristrup follow and demonstrate, in two separate articles, the often underestimated importance of art and creativity in later life. Amy Woodhouse’s piece, **Exploring the Impact of Participatory Arts on Older People: What the Research Literature Tells us**, is based on the evidence review of the impact of participatory arts on older people, prepared by the Mental Health Foundation in 2011. The aim of the review was to help stakeholders improve and extend their work with older people, and to support further research in the area. Following strict criteria during the review, the obtained results show that participatory arts have an impact at individual level (mental well-being, physical well-being), community level (social contact, friendship, relationships etc.) and societal level (breaking stigmas, inclusion, attitudes toward elderly etc.). Nevertheless, as Woodhouse points out, participatory arts are still overlooked and the evidence base is relatively weak. It can thus be concluded that, even though the potential of culture to improve health and well-being among older adult is huge, this is a perspective which differs greatly from established discourses on ageing. This is also the argument brought forward by Tine Fristrup who, in her article **Craving Creativity in Later Life**, discusses the notion of creative ageing as opposed to dominant discourses on ageing and old age. In practice this means that heritage institutions are developing several methods with focus on older adults.

In three separate articles by Marvin Formosa, Henning Lindberg and Britt-Marie Borgström the links between cultural heritage methodologies and mental well-being in later life are vividly exemplified by reminiscence work conducted at cultural heritage institutions and through cultural heritage methods. Reminiscence is a creative activity which enables meaningful solutions to past problems, says Marvin Formosa and his article **Creativity in Later Life: Possibilities for Personal Empowerment**. During the summer of 2012 Formosa conducted reminiscence sessions with older people. The results of this empirical research enabled him to conclude that creative engagement in later life improves levels of personal empowerment: both intrapersonal and interpersonal. Henning Lindberg, in his piece **The House of Memory**, narrates how a memory house at an open air museum is used for older citizens with Alzheimer’s disease and senile dementia. Similarly, Britt-Marie Borgström, in her piece **Museums and Memories – Stimulation of the Memory and Estimating Quality of Life**, writes about two specific projects where several museums in Sweden cooperated in develop-

ing activities for older adults diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. Borgström shows how an open air museum can be used for reminiscence sessions with older people.

In the final chapter, **Volunteers and Heritage**, Anna Hansen writes about volunteers in the heritage sector in Sweden. Her research is based on a nation-wide questionnaire in combination with in-depth interviews with key persons within the heritage sector in the region of Jämtland. She found that volunteering is positive, not only for the hosting heritage institutions but also for the volunteers themselves. This seems to be especially true for third age volunteers. Volunteering gives them meaning, prevents exclusion and has positive health implications. In spite of the benefits, volunteers are often ambiguously perceived by cultural heritage institutions: as a resource, but also as a threat to the professional workers. This has led to parallel organisations that mitigate these tensions, so called "social clubs" and "public member's scheme" which seem a good solution, not least from the perspective of the trade unions.

At least two perspectives are important to consider when the challenge of the ageing population is addressed: the purely economical aspects deriving from the fact that decreasing cohorts of young and middle aged people will have to support increasing numbers of older people, and the softer issues of health and well-being in later life. This anthology will mainly address the second of these perspectives: how can heritage institutions promote health and well-being among older adults? However, deeply related with aspects of physical and mental well-being are aspects of financial stability and well-fare at the wider national and European scale. Healthy individuals with social networks and a willingness to learn and experience new things in spite of high age are, quite naturally, less likely to need society's support. The benefits of heritage institutions, when the issue of the ageing population is addressed, is thus manifold and include economic factors as well as factors related to health and well-being.

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AGEING AND WORK IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION: PROBLEMS AND REMEDIES

Abstract

The present report is based on results from the EU Interreg Baltic Sea project, "Best Agers – using the knowledge and experience of professionals in their primes to foster business and skills development in the Baltic Sea Region". It addresses the demographic problem in the different Baltic Sea countries, and identifies common as well as national problems and remedies. It is found that such common barriers include (a) formal discriminatory rules and regulations, (b) that women do not sustain working life and exit earlier than men, (c) adverse work conditions, and (d) negative attitudes in working life and in the society at large. A list of recommendations addressing specific Swedish concerns is included.¹¹

"Companies as such should definitely confess to their elderly workforce. This is what I'm really angry about – the industry is crying for skilled labour force, and there are countless older workers who are perfectly skilled. There is kind of a "youth obsession"; I think a good age-mix is the best." (German industrial manager, age 55)

Demography, ageing and work – addressing a European concern

There is in many countries around the world an upcoming demographic crisis that is often said to be a threat to the welfare systems. Across the EU, there is a negative demographic trend; however, its characteristics differ between member countries. The demographic problem level depends on factors such as life expectancy, nativity, and population flow balance (immigrants versus emigrants). These are factors that need to be studied at regional and national levels.

¹¹ The recommendations made are at the sole responsibility of "The Best Agers Project", and can in no way be taken as opinions of the European Union.

One of the major demographic effects is the development of the workforce, which is usually defined as the number of citizens aged 15–64 years, in relation to the number in the age below 15 and over 64 years. The European Union in its Lisbon strategy¹², emphasised that work participation in the older workforce needs to increase, in order to reduce the burden on the pension systems, and to ensure adequate workforce supply. The average employment rate for older people in the EU has indeed continued to grow, albeit slowly, reaching for the 55–64 year olds a 46.0% in 2009, compared with 36.9% in 2002 and 45.6% in 2008.¹³ The situation differs however again significantly between member states.

A combination of low work participation among older people and a negative demographic trend forecasts a particularly difficult scenario that needs to be considered seriously at the national political level. This observation was one of the backgrounds to the INTERREG Baltic Sea project, “Best Agers – using the knowledge and experience of professionals in their primes to foster business and skills development in the Baltic Sea Region”. This project, which encompasses 19 partners from 8 countries, commenced in 2010 and continued throughout the year 2012, designated by the EU as “The international year of active ageing and intergenerational solidarity”. One of the most important aspects of this project was to analyse the demographic and employment patterns in the participating countries, with special emphasis on the situation at the NUTS 3 and NUTS 4 levels,¹⁴ i.e. counties or groups of counties, situated by the Baltic Sea. Another main goal was to map barriers hindering continued work participation among the 55+ in the countries concerned.

This paper aims at presenting the study results concerning demography and work participation in the Baltic States Region, and of barriers impairing the possibilities for people older than 55 years to remain in the active workforce.

¹² Nicole Fontaine, “Presidency conclusions. Lisbon European Council. 23rd and 24th March 2000,” (2000).

¹³ Eurostat News release, “Employment rate in the EU27 fell to 64.6% in 2009, but rate for older workers up to 46.0%,” *Labour Force Survey 117/2010 2010*.

¹⁴ The NUTS classification (Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics) is a hierarchical system for dividing up the economic territory of the EU. NUTS 1: major socio-economic regions; NUTS 2: basic regions for the application of regional policies; NUTS 3: small regions for specific diagnoses. The first level of local administrative unit, called NUTS 4, is the level immediately below Region.

Demographic findings

In the Best Agers project, demographic analyses were carried out for the Baltic States with respect to current (2008) and projected (2030) characteristics.¹⁵ Major demographic indicators included population size and age profiles for men and women. Even though all EU countries have an ageing population, there are marked differences not only between countries, but notably also within countries. In some NUTS 3 regions, no sizeable demographic effects are expected; these included in Germany Hamburg, Trier and Oberbayern, and in Sweden Stockholm, West Sweden and South Sweden. On the other hand, NUTS 3 regions with very high projected effects included in Germany Sachsen-Anhalt, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Brandenburg-Nordost, Thüringen and Dresden, and in Poland Opolskie and Świętokrzyskie. In many regions, a combination of population decline and ageing demographic profile is expected; this is likely to cause severe problems with respect to cut-backs in economy and societal service.

However, also regions with apparently healthy projected demographic profiles may face problems. The ratio of working-age population to total population is in fact expected to decrease in all BSR countries. And for instance in West Sweden there are several municipalities where a population decline exceeding 10% is expected to occur between 2008 and 2020.¹⁶

In all countries of the Baltic Sea Region there is a significant resource among older workers that if utilized to a larger extent, could help alleviate the negative economic effects of the demographic change. But experience indicates that a full range of initiatives have to be taken in order to make it possible for a large part of the older workers to remain in or to re-enter working life; it is not enough to create economic incentives for the best agers to work longer. There are in fact widespread unsupported opinions concerning older workers that present obstacles that may be difficult to overcome.

Keeping the older in the workforce for longer may partly compensate for the shrinking of younger generations. However, we see large differences in rates of growth of older working-age groups and we also see large differences in attitudes towards active ageing and in the implementation of EU policies regarding employment of the older. Taking notice and understanding these differences may help to overcome difficulties in adapting to demographic change.

¹⁵ T. Tivig and C. Korb, “Best Agers project: Work Participation and Employability of Best Agers in the Baltic Sea Region. Final Report,” (University of Rostock, 2012).

¹⁶ R. Kadefors, “Regional demographic case study – Västra Götaland (NUTS 3 region),” (University of Gothenburg, 2011).

Common concerns for the Baltic Sea Region

It is clear that across the entire BSR there is a recognized need to increase work participation in the age range 55–64 years and higher, but how can this be achieved? Even though each country has its own specific conditions and concerns with respect to ageing and work, analyses show that to a large extent, countries in the Baltic Sea region share problems as well as possible remedies. The present report is divided into a general part, applicable across the entire BSR, and a country specific part, adapted to the Swedish context.¹⁷

We need to identify the barriers that impair work participation of older people.

Formal barriers must be removed

In all countries of the BSR, there are discriminatory rules and regulations that impair the possibility of older people to extend their working lives. Such barriers may concern pension systems that even punish continuing working, or prevent older people from continuing working after they have reached a certain age, even if they may wish to do so. Access to adult education may be prevented after a certain age. Older people may face age based economic barriers if they wish to start their own business. Part time work, which is an attractive alternative to many older people, is sometimes not supported.

Every country needs to scrutinize what changes are needed in the legal system so as to eliminate all types of age discrimination, in accordance with the European Directive.¹⁸ An effective ombudsman function, which follows up complaints from citizens who feel that they have been subject to age discrimination, should be instituted. Mainstreaming policies against age discrimination should be part of national strategies.

Labour market conditions need reform

Statistics show that blue collar workers exit the labour market earlier than white collar workers, particularly so when compared with academic professionals. Inability to comply with conditions at the workplace prevents many workers from continuing working up to legislated pension age. Sustained work ability can be achieved at the work place by implementing age management practices; that is, providing all age groups with adequate work-

¹⁷ This report builds on the summary report, The Labour Market and Demographic Change in the Baltic Sea Region. Study Results and Recommendations of the Best Agers Project. It can be downloaded from the project website, www.best-agers-project.eu.

¹⁸ Council Directive (2000), 'Establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation', 2000/78/EC, Official Journal of the European Communities, L303/16–22, 2.12.2000

ing conditions. Such initiatives include also competence development for all, through implementation of lifelong learning practices, and preventive health care services at the workplace. Adequate health and preserved competence contribute substantially to the sustained employability of Best Agers.

Women exit work earlier, but why?

Females exit working life earlier than men in the whole of the BSR, in white collar and blue collar occupations alike. In part, these gender differences may be caused by an increased mismatch in older women between individual work ability and work demands, but also cultural factors do play a role. Many women are prone to exit work life early, whenever this is economically feasible, due to family reasons.

Increasing work participation in older women, which in some countries is very low, would be one of the most effective measures at hand in order to address the demographic challenge. A spectrum of measures needs to be considered. For instance, in some countries, the pension age is lower for women than for men. This may prevent many qualified older women from continuing working. Women's working conditions need reform. And better economic incentives for prolonging working life may be very attractive for many older women.

Negative attitudes need to be changed

Negative attitudes toward older workers are prevalent in all parts of the BSR. It is one of the barriers most frequently highlighted by older people who wish to remain in or return to working life, after having been made redundant. Such attitudes are found all over: among employers, managers, work-mates, and among the best agers themselves. They even extend to governmental agencies and decision makers at the political level. They focus on age related physical and mental changes that allegedly impair the work ability of older people, but they disregard the positive aspects of ageing: know-how, experience, social ability, reliability, and carefulness. They also disregard the individual dimension: age alone is a poor predictor of work ability.

So attitudes need to be changed, but how? Changing attitudes is an admittedly difficult task. It is therefore encouraging that there are examples of countries where attitudes toward older workers have changed to the better, and also where pension reforms aiming at a prolonged working life have been instituted without much public resistance. We refer here to the Norwegian example.

The Norwegian example

In the beginning of the 2000s, the Norwegian government noted that more people were leaving the labour market than entering it. This was not considered sustainable, and a process aiming at extending the average working life of Norwegian citizens was started. The point of departure was “The Tripartite Agreement on a more Inclusive Workplace” (the IW-agreement), in October 2001. Here the government and the social partners agreed to work toward an increase in labour market participation among older workers; i.e. an increase in the effective retirement age.

In January 2011, about ten years later, a major pension reform, covering the entire private sector of the labour market, came into force. In Norway, it means that obligatory pension age is now abolished. As an employee, you may retain your permanent position and continue earning pension points up to age 75.

This important reform was decided upon in the Norwegian parliament, the Stortinget, and implemented without any major protests. The effective pension age has increased already. And the attitudes of employers toward older employees improved markedly between 2003 and 2007. But how could this happen, taking into account the violent reactions seen across Europe, when governments announce their intention to increase pension age?

One of the major lessons to be learned is that it may take time to develop consensus and acceptance around societal reforms that affect large parts of the population; perhaps not a decade is needed like in Norway, but sufficient time; and it is likely that the time required for a successful process may be longer in societies with a history of conflict between political power, trade unions, and employers.

A concrete Norwegian initiative that should be considered for benchmarking in other European countries is the creation of the Centre for Senior Policy (Senter for Seniorpolitikk), a national platform for information, communication and debate of senior policy issues. This platform, which is financed by the government, engages a wide spectrum of stakeholders, including ministries, political parties, governmental authorities, employer and employee organizations, researchers and NGOs, such as pensioners’ organizations. A website has been developed for communication purposes. Here it is stated:

“The purpose of the Centre is to make individuals, companies and politicians aware of the benefits of being adaptable in the workplace, as an increasing proportion of the workforce is aging. By promoting research, through awareness campaigns and by forging links with the Workers’ Union, the Employers’ Association and

politicians, the Centre encourages a broad range of activities that aim to reverse the growing trend towards early retirement.”¹⁹

Sweden’s route forward

In addition to the points that are valid for the whole of the BSR, there are specific concerns that need to be addressed in Sweden. Even though the work life problems linked to the demographic changes may be less demanding than in many other countries, Sweden will have to change its age relevant policies and practices.

In light of the problems and the solutions identified in the Best Ager project, what should Sweden do?

Maintain the strong role of the social partners. As the Norwegian example illustrates, this is an essential ingredient in order to make possible to establish significant changes in working life peacefully.

Facilitate benchmarking of successful approaches and solutions. Create networks for exchange of experiences between employers who are concerned about competence supply and development in an ageing society.

Reform working life. Work conditions must be such that also blue collar workers are given a realistic opportunity to continue working up to, or beyond, official pension age.

Avoid instituting a discriminatory pension system. Simply increasing pension age, or to abolish it altogether, is likely to lead to a widening of the gaps between occupational groups, and would leave large groups behind.

Create economic incentives. Even though the impact of economic benefits in order to motivate older people to continue working should not be overestimated, there should be some economic incentive for all. This is not the case at present.

Revoke all sorts of age discrimination in laws and regulations. Provide all age groups with adequate opportunities, for instance by making employment costs age neutral.

Create new incentives for competence development in the labour market. In order to implement lifelong learning and to support sustained employability, a system with individual “competence checks” was devised some years ago, but not implemented. This initiative should be considered anew by politicians and social partners.

Open for better possibilities for older people to work part-time. The policy of the present government has been to increase incentives for full-time work. This, however, is not beneficial for older people who feel they cannot sustain full-time, but would be open for carrying out part-time work.

¹⁹ Centre for Senior Policy, <http://www.seniorpolitikk.no>.

Be alert to the particular needs of older women in the labour market. Work participation in older age is lower among women than among older men in virtually all occupations. Technical and organizational measures at the workplace may be needed in many cases.

Create incentives for employers and trade unions to implement age management practices at the workplace level. The social partners should make this a joint concern.

Build safeguards against age discrimination in the operation of governmental agencies having an impact on ageing and work. There are age discrimination practices that must be eliminated, even in governmental agencies.

Monitor complaints from citizens who feel discriminated on the basis of age, and review the handling of the complaints in the judicial system. Sweden does have an ombudsman function covering age discrimination, but its impact has been marginal.

Create a national platform for information exchange, discussion and debate about senior policy issues. Learn from the Norwegian experience. Provide the platform with adequate governmental support.

Address the prevailing negative attitudes toward older employees among employers, in public and private sectors alike. Ageism and negative attitudes constitute perhaps the most important barriers to a prolonged working life. Learn from the Finnish and Norwegian endeavours.

Be alert to the needs of regions and municipalities that are subject to negative demographic trends. It is necessary to empower regional stakeholders in order to create a sustainable working life for all.

Create opportunities and encourage older people to become entrepreneurs. This may be a more attractive alternative to early exit from work life than is often understood.

Find ways for older people to make their knowledge useful. Encourage best agers to become mentors in business and work life.

Be trendsetters. Involve older people in parliamentary work and other visible governmental operations. In the present Swedish parliament, less than two per cent of the members are older than 65 years. This is even less than in the previous parliament. For instance, the European parliament has a much higher senior representation.

Conclusions

The Best Agers Project has defined needs for action in the whole of the Baltic Sea Region, and it has performed analyses aiming at understanding the nature of the problem at a regional and sub-regional basis. Possible remedies have been identified. The reports produced in the project, also comprising other aspects than employment (e.g. mentoring, entrepreneurship) relating

to the possibility to make older people more economically active in the society, can be downloaded from www.best-agers-project.eu. The following list of reports comprises those reports relevant to the aspect of demography and securing competence through continued work participation in the 55+.

Reports

Work Participation and Employability of Best Agers in the Baltic Sea Region. Center for the Study of Demographic Change, University of Rostock (DE).

This report contains a major overview of the demographic situation and work participation across the BSR countries and regions, and identifies the vulnerabilities linked to ageing and shrinkage. There is also a review of what is known about factors that constitute sustained employability of best agers. Appendices include specific reports contributed from partners in Germany, Poland, Sweden, and Lithuania.

Study of employment patterns in selected BSR regions. County of Pinneberg, Schleswig-Holstein (DE).

The aim of this report is to analyze the employment patterns of older workers – mostly the age group 55–64, the so-called ‘Best Agers’ – in selected regions of the Baltic Sea Region, based on contributions from Germany, Poland, Latvia and Sweden.

Best Agers in the Baltic Sea Region – A comparative study of employers’ attitudes. County of Pinneberg, Schleswig-Holstein (DE).

Based on data gathered by project partners in six BSR countries, results are presented concerning employers’ awareness of the demographic threats, and their attitudes toward older workers. For instance, the report identifies gaps between perceived incentives for older workers in terms of longer employment, and the actual offers enterprises are providing for their Best Agers.

Perceived employment situation of Best Agers in the Baltic Sea Region: an interview study. Department of Sociology and Work Science, University of Gothenburg, Göteborg (SE).

Based on interview data retrieved by partners in six BSR countries, barriers to continued work participation are identified. Competence and health related barriers are highlighted by best agers in all countries, but the most prevalent barrier experienced is the negative attitudes.

Analysis of rules, regulations, policies and strategies at national and regional level, in the fields of employment, retirement, education and training, and career planning. Institute for European Initiatives and Gdansk University of Technology (PL).

In this report, the policy frameworks with respect to work participation of Best Agers in the BSR are outlined, with special emphasis on national and regional initiatives in Poland, Sweden and Lithuania.

Survey on what support instruments are missing for stimulating activity of people 50+. Institute for European Initiatives (PL).

In this report, an analysis is presented with respect to the need for new initiatives for stimulating professional activity of best agers in various regions of Europe, using Polish conditions as a point of departure.

Costs and Benefits of Best Agers Employment. Department of Sociology and Work Science, University of Gothenburg, Göteborg (SE).

Economic considerations and concerns present a major barrier with respect to sustained employment of Best Agers. In this report the costs and benefits of keeping or employing older workers are analyzed. Models for economic analysis are presented. It is shown that introduction of age management can be highly profitable.

Competence preservation and transfer in a generation shift. Department of Sociology and Work Science, University of Gothenburg, Göteborg (SE).

In a generation shift in a small or medium size company, the company may face closure due to problems to find a competent successor. Based on contributions from four countries, this report analyzes the level of problem awareness in the BSR countries and offers for benchmarking a Swedish tool for sellers and buyers of SMEs.

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Sara Grut, The Nordic Centre of Heritage Learning and Creativity

THE CHALLENGE OF AGEING POPULATIONS – ASSESSING THE CONTRIBUTION OF HERITAGE AND CREATIVE LEARNING

Abstract

The population of Europe is ageing. Increased life expectancy, decreased fertility and the retirement of baby boom generations calls for new and inventive actions to combat ill-health and social exclusion. This article argues that heritage institutions like museum and archives should be encouraged to support the integration of creativity and learning in the life of older adults. Older adults have always been an important target group for heritage institutions but a more active stance towards the challenge of the ageing population calls for an intensified exchange of ideas and practices within the sector itself. On a political level, learning through culture has not often been a prioritised area but we are starting to see a growing tendency and interest to integrate culture in development policies.

The 2012 European year of active ageing and solidarity between generations has added to the visibility and discussion of a well-known fact: Europe is ageing – fast.²⁰ But long before the challenge of the so called greying of Europe made it into the arenas of political decision making, museums had started to create programmes and activities in order to suit older adult learners. In fact, with or without tailor-made offers, the non-formal and informal learning environments of museums have always attracted an older adult audience.²¹

²⁰ See for example Tony Maltby and Alan Walker, "Active ageing: A strategic policy solution to demographic ageing in the European Union," *International Journal of Social Welfare* 21, no. Issue supplement s1 (2012); or European Commission, "The 2009 Ageing Report. Underlying Assumptions and Projection Methodologies," in *European Economy* (DG Economic and Financial Affairs, 2008), 17.

²¹ Henrik Zipsane, "Heritage learning in service for the memories and life quality of senior citizens," *International Journal of Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning* 3, no. 2 (2011): especially 94–95.

This short paper is closely connected to the work of an international group of museum officials cooperating under the theme of “Museums and the ageing population”. The group maps best practises of heritage learning for older adults and investigates how national or regional policies either aid or make difficult the promotion of such learning opportunities. The main outcome of the group is a set of policy recommendations targeted to the European Commission, National and regional governments and to the European museum sector.²²

Bearing upon this work I will argue for the role of museums and other heritage institutions when it comes to supporting creativity and learning in the later part of life. I shall give examples of techniques that are currently used in European museums but will also discuss what I perceive as obstacles for reaching the full potential of heritage institutions in their promotion of older adult learning.

First, however, a few words on the terminology used in this paper and the meaning I attribute to the expression “older adult”. Nation states draw the line for older adulthood very differently but for the most part, retirement age is central. Ideally, all people should work up until a certain age although we know that reality tells a different story. We are born with, and throughout life we acquire, different sets of conditions that will effect how we age. In short, one could say that the concept of chronological age is somewhat problematic. Taking this into account and following gerontologists Brian Findsen and Marvin Formosa, I will use the term older adult to describe a person who is no longer at work and no longer in the process of raising a family. Thus the focus here is less on age and more on factors related to a stage in the life-cycle of a person.²³

Learning and participation – key elements

One of the most apparent trends of today’s European museum sector is that of learning and participation. *The participatory museum* is not only the title of an often-cited book by American museum director and blogger, Nina Simon, but also a model of governance that is increasingly put into practise all over Europe. The time when people were viewed primarily as passive recipients of knowledge based facts is over. By engaging in dialogue with their

²² The recommendations are to be published during spring of 2013. The work group on Museums and the ageing population is part of the Learning Museum Network project funded through the European Commission. More information about the group can be found on the website, see The Learning Museum, <http://www.lemproject.eu/>.

²³ Brian Findsen and Marvin Formosa, *Lifelong Learning in Later Life. A Handbook on Older Adult Learning* (Rotterdam, Boston, Taipei: Sense publishers, 2001). 11.

users, museums are striving to make a greater difference on both individual and community level.²⁴

According to the EU, older adults that participate in society are more likely to age actively and healthy.²⁵ In a brochure about how to promote active ageing in Europe, produced by the organisation AGE Platform in partnership with the European Commission it is said that a high level of participation also depends on social networks. “Local and regional actors can do much to help older people network and thus help them to participate in their preferred activities, continue to learn and to engage with friends, family and neighbours”.²⁶

Participation is closely connected to learning. Our societies are changing faster than before, resulting for example in new technologies and new patterns of connecting and networking. The concept of lifelong learning has been put forward, partly as a response to this never-ending need to learn in order to stay connected to society.²⁷ But a realistic agenda for lifelong learning cannot build simply upon formal institutions for learning and the resources connected to these. Following the argumentation of political analyst Tom Bentley, we should infuse our whole societies with learning rather than trying to promote one single sector for learning. Moreover Bentley also emphasises the need for more participatory ways of acquiring and sharing information and knowledge, moving beyond older patterns of one-way communication.²⁸

The realisation of Bentley’s vision for a learning society is dependant on whether institutions, that have not traditionally been associated with learning, will start perceiving themselves as learning spaces. Museums and galleries are already well into this process while other kinds of heritage institutions

²⁴ Nina Simon, *The participatory museum* (Museum 2.0, 2010).

²⁵ During the European Year on active ageing and solidarity between generations, active ageing is promoted in mainly three areas, besides participation in society these areas are employment and independent living. See European Year for Active Ageing, “About the year,” <http://europa.eu/ey2012/ey2012main.jsp?catId=971&langId=en>.

²⁶ European Commission and European Union – Committee of the Regions & AGE Platform Europe, “How to promote active ageing in Europe. EU support to local and regional actors,” (2011), 20.

²⁷ On the concept of lifelong learning and the changing society, see for example Peter Jarvis, *Globalisation, lifelong learning and the learning society. Sociological perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2007). See especially Chapter 12.

²⁸ Tom Bentley, “Learning beyond the Classroom,” *Educational Management & Administration* 28, no. 3 (2000): 363–64.

like for example archives still have some way to go.²⁹ Although different in certain aspects, many of the learning techniques used are similar regardless the type of heritage institution or setting.³⁰ A stronger focus on cooperation and exchange of strategies for learning between heritage institutions of different types would thus benefit not only the sector itself but also, of course, its users.

What is then the role of heritage institutions in the evolving learning society? Referring to recommendations on how to promote active ageing in Europe I believe they offer very good conditions for facilitating networking, participation and learning for older adults. But heritage institutions need always to be open to the fact that older adults might not have a “preferred activity” and in these cases provide guidance to new creative paths.

The heritage sector can also provide examples that help to balance up the older adult policy agenda, which today is largely dominated by the health and activity paradigm. Certainly, health and activity does not necessarily rule out an approach of creative ageing. However, generally speaking, heritage and creativity play no major role in older adult policy making.³¹

The policy factor

As just mentioned, there is a scarcity of policies within this particular area but things are starting to move in new directions. A growing number of countries and regions are starting to promote health and wellbeing through culture and this is done in numerous ways. Large-scale initiatives include the adoption of ambitious policy programmes or government funded activities.

²⁹ Jakoba Šraml González, *Practical trends in heritage learning in Europe 2012* (The Nordic Centre of Heritage Learning and Creativity AB, 2013).

³⁰ On the different strands of heritage learning see for example Henrik Zipsane, “Lifelong Learning through Heritage and Art,” in *The Routledge International Handbook of Lifelong Learning*, ed. Peter Jarvis (London: Routledge, 2008).

³¹ We find “creative ageing” in the name of networks, organisation etc. that aim to promote creativity among older adults. However, the expression is with some exceptions less common in research. See for example Gene D. Cohen, *The Creative age. Awakening Human Potential in the Second Half of Life* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001). See also Tine Fristrup’s contribution to this publication. Fristrup is interested in the power dimension related to the discourse of active and healthy ageing and sees the concept of creative ageing as an alternative way of empowering older adults.

Other examples comprise, for example, of regional action plans for ageing or schemes for “culture by prescription”.³²

A small study of national policies concerning access to culture for older adults, performed in 2011 by the work group on Museums and the ageing population, showed however that differences between European nation states are profound. While some governments have promoted this issue on a policy level for over a decade or more, others do not have any plans of launching similar schemes.³³

On an EU level, the policy initiatives concerning ageing and older adults are steadily increasing and the promotion of good health and especially active and healthy ageing has a central role in the EU 10-year economic-growth strategy, the so called Europe 2020.³⁴ However, this and other strategic documents say nothing or very little about the potential role of culture in this regard. So nation states and regions that want to develop policy schemes concerning the use of culture to promote the wellbeing of older adults, need to look elsewhere for inspiration.

³² Culture by prescription was initiated by the Swedish government and launched as a pilot project in the southernmost region of Sweden, Skåne, in 2009. Instead of prescribing medications, a medical doctor can choose to prescribe a culture-based activity. In the report of the project it is stated that “[p]rescribed culture should be seen as a complementary method and a resource for rehabilitation, which also in part challenges the traditional view on health care.” In Sören Augustinsson, *Prescribed culture. Summary of resulting research* (Region Skåne: Koncernkontoret, avdelningen för hälso- och sjukvård, 2011). 3. Many Swedish regions have followed the example of Skåne and are planning to or have already implementing culture by prescription.

³³ In June 2011 a letter was sent to around 30 ministries of health and/or culture across Europe, inquiring whether the government had a national policy concerning older people’s access to culture in general or heritage in particular. Ten answers were obtained, mostly from the northern parts of Europe. In addition the work group members have also each provided accounts of the situations in the countries of residency. See Sara Grut, “First overview of national policies,” (Working paper produced for the work group on Museums and the ageing population, 2011). The study of national policies are also presented in Report 2 – Heritage and the Aging Population, The Learning Museum Network Project, 2013.

³⁴ Health issues are primarily promoted as part of the focus on smart growth under the Flagship Initiative “Innovation Union”. See European Commission, “Communication from the Commission. Europe 2020. A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth,” in *COM(2010) 2020 final* (Brussels 2010). Further, the concept of lifelong learning is since long one of EU’s most fundamental strategies for increasing the member states’ competitiveness in regards to the knowledge economy. However, just like with healthy and active ageing, lifelong learning does not necessarily include the perspective of culture and creativity or even the group of older adults discussed in this text.

One particularly interesting source of inspiration is the research that is currently being undertaken on cultural and creative industries. Pier Luigi Sacco, who is Professor in cultural economy and a European expert on culture, argues that decision makers and policy officer in many cases lack experience from the cultural sector and thus tend to underestimate the contribution of culture to our economies. Culture is, by them, still understood as a sector largely living on external subsidies, generating very little resources and in times of financial crises usually policy makers turn to culture to make the first cuts. Examples of successful culture-led development projects for cities and regions have also often been discarded as exceptional cases with little effect on policy making on a general level.³⁵

But according to Sacco there is now a growing interest from administrations at all levels to integrate culture into development policies. But just like in the study of the work group on Museums and the ageing population, he recognises that initiative is unevenly distributed across cities, regions and nation states while “the overall awareness at the European level remains scarce and scattered”.³⁶

Sacco also mentions the potential spillovers from culture on welfare and cultural welfare and refers to previous studies that show how cultural participation can positively effect both life expectation and the feeling of wellbeing, especially in regard to the seriously ill and the elderly. More research is needed in order to draw conclusions about how cultural prevention strategies might have effect on a macro-economic level, but according to Sacco even very small reductions in, for example, rates of hospitalization could do much for the saving of public resources.³⁷

Heritage based tools for learning in later life

I have now very briefly dealt with the broad set of pre-conditions guiding heritage institutions that are currently working with or want to develop offers for older adult learners. The next step will be to investigate what it is the heritage institutions actually do within this field and what the possibilities and limitations of their approaches are.

Older adult learners constitute a big group and for practical reasons most heritage institutions seem to make a distinction that concerns the extent to which a person is able to actively participate in a programme or a certain

³⁵ Pier Luigi Sacco, “Culture 3.0: A new perspective for the EU 2014–2020 structural funds programming,” (Produced for the OMC Working Group on Cultural and Creative Industries, April 2011, 2011), 1.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid., 7

activity. Most commonly, institutions refer to the third and the fourth ages or stages.

The third stage signifies the sudden or gradual transition into retired life. For many it means being largely healthy, active and having more time to spend on family, friends and interests.³⁸ People in the third stage, according to researchers Tom Schuller and David Watson make “a massive unpaid contribution to society. They volunteer in greater numbers than other age groups; they care for each other and for those older and younger than themselves.” The fourth stage, on the contrary, denotes a phase in the life cycle where the degree of dependency is higher and in which many suffer from different forms of chronic illness. Due to lengthened life expectancy and to the demographic changes referred to in the beginning of this text, this group is increasing steadily. Identifying this stage and lending to it certain characteristic can to some extent be perceived as negative, but as Schuller and Watson point out it also paves way to “positive opportunities for innovation, and meaningful learning.”³⁹

The range of programmes and activities offered by the heritage sector to older adults in the third age or stage is wide-reaching and can include more or less of participatory elements. Voluntary activities are highly participatory and exist in many shapes and forms. Older adults often have particular skills or experiences and for many heritage institutions, engaging volunteers is a way of interacting with members of the community while at the same time benefiting from their special competences.⁴⁰ Some heritage institutions also employ older adults, for example in learning schemes, to share with groups their experiences of past events. But the contribution can of course also be of a more practical nature, like doing or demonstrating crafts. Museums and older adults thus become involved in mutual learning.⁴¹

However, the great majority of older adults does not use heritage institutions in this participatory manner but come to follow lecture series, guided tours, excursions or other, more passive forms of events. It is important not to discard any forms of involvement of older adults. Some will never look

³⁸ According Schuller and Watson the third stage can roughly be said to signify the ages from 50–75. See Tom Schuller and David Watson, *Learning Through Life. Inquiry into the Future of Lifelong Learning* (Leicester: NIACE, 2009), 95.

³⁹ Ibid. 97–99. Citation from p. 97.

⁴⁰ Anna Hansen, “Are volunteers unpaid staff or a group of learners?,” in *Heritage, Regional Development and Social Cohesion*, ed. Peter Kearns, Sofia Kling, and Christina Wistman, *Fornvårdaren* (Östersund: Jamtli Forlag, 2011), 62–63.

⁴¹ Henrik Zipsane, “How museums address the changing demographics of the 21st Century,” in *Anders Sandviken og Maihaugen – årbog 2012* (2012), 12.

for more than passive engagement while others will continue into more participatory activities.

In comparison to the kind of activities described above, programmes for older adults in the fourth age or stage are in some ways more demanding, both in terms of resources and special knowledge. For the fourth age, reminiscence therapies of different kinds have long existed in the heritage sector and remain today very popular. The idea is to connect to the remote memories of participants. Assumedly, remote memories stay with us longer as our memory functions decline which in turn presents an opportunity for increased communication and interaction. Introduced in the 1980s, these sets of methods are primarily aimed at people suffering from dementia and concerns the discussion and evoking of past memories, experiences, events and activities. The sessions often take place in small groups and a range of different supporting materials are used.⁴²

One branch of reminiscence therapies that have been promoted widely in the last years is interactive gallery programmes especially developed for people with dementia and their family members or carers. For example, the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York have successfully run this kind of programme for a number of years and are now spreading their method to European art institutions.⁴³

Participatory arts and object handling are also used quite extensively for older adults in both the third and the fourth ages. In 2011, a British study by the Mental health foundation reviewed a large number of existing articles and reports to find out more about the effects of participatory arts on older adults. According to their analysis, participatory arts is an under-researched area with a weak evidence base. However, the field is viewed as highly promising and existing research suggests that participatory arts can

⁴² Maria Cotelli, Rosa Manenti, and Orazio Zanetti, "Reminiscence therapy in dementia: A review," *Maturltas* 72, no. 3 (2012): 203. For a practical example, please see the article by Henning Lindberg about The House of Memory in Aarhus, Denmark in this publication.

⁴³ The programme is called "Meet me at MoMA", read more Museum of Modern Art, "Meet me at MoMA," <http://www.moma.org/meetme/>. The first example of an European programme that is inspired by this programme is Memoria del bello (The memory of beauty), read more National gallery of modern art in Rome, "Memoria del bello," <http://www.gnam.beniculturali.it/index.php?it/169/il-progetto-la-memoria-del-bello>. The second example is Möte med minnen (Meeting with memories), read more National gallery in Stockholm, "Möte med minnen," <http://www.nationalmuseum.se/sv/Om-Nationalmuseum/Aktuellt/Moten-med-Minnen/>.

improve wellbeing and in particular mental wellbeing on both an individual and a community level.⁴⁴

Unfortunately, when we speak about older adult learning in heritage institutions, participatory arts is not the only under-researched area. While a wide range of different programmes and activities are being run and developed at heritage institutions across Europe, there is still little evidence these offers actually have effect. What is striking when you meet people involved in this field is their deep-felt dedication and enthusiasm. Their testimonies of outcomes serve as an inspiration to others but can do little to help advancing the promotion of these issues broadly and in other sectors of our communities. As with participatory arts, there are studies suggesting that reminiscence therapy can improve factors such as autobiographical memory, mood, wellbeing and behaviour in patients with dementia. However, evidence is still scarce. Most evaluations are based on small numbers of participants and are far from flawless in regard to quality.⁴⁵

Nevertheless, I think it is safe to say that heritage institutions are gradually realising the growing needs to produce sound, reliable data. But to measure outcomes of the programmes discussed here might demand competences other than those that we normally find among professionals within the heritage sector. This is why heritage institutions are more and more often teaming up with researchers within fields such as medicine, psychology or pedagogy. The need to look outside the heritage sector for these competences presents, to a certain extent, a problem, but can also be perceived as an opportunity that gives birth to new and interesting, cross-sectorial, partnerships.

Concluding remarks

In this text I have touched upon a few factors which I perceive as obstacles for reaching the full potential of heritage institutions in their promotion of older adult learning. One major obstacle concerns the scarcity of EU policy within this particular area. Often the heritage sector has taken on the challenge of the ageing population without having political incitements to support this work. One could of course argue that we should let this process of engagement evolve, so to say, "organically". But to leave the heritage sector to manage this task without giving guidance and tools I think would be to the disadvantage of our local communities and societies at large. Coopera-

⁴⁴ Mental health foundation, "An Evidence Review of the impact of participatory arts on older people," <http://www.baringfoundation.org.uk/EvidenceReview.pdf>. 41. See also the piece by Amy Woodhouse in this publication. Woodhouse was part of the evaluation project team which performed the evidence review.

⁴⁵ Cotelli, Manenti, and Zanetti, "Reminiscence therapy in dementia: A review," 205.

tion and good examples are vital for fuelling new initiatives and this does not only concern the heritage sector as such. National and regional governments also need to be introduced to policies and activities where heritage in its broadest meaning is made accessible and relevant for older adults. Without coordination or framework, the potential for development and change, on all societal levels, is significantly reduced.

More and better policies would also encourage increased cooperation between the heritage sector and other community agents in relevant fields, including those with knowledge and experience of performing high quality evaluations of mental and physical wellbeing. As mentioned in this article, awareness and the level of commitment to research on effects have increased in the latest years, but a lot of work remains before we can make statements, for example about the contribution of the heritage learning sector on a macro-economic level.

Sacco believes in developing cultural participation with a social agenda but shares my concern about the need for further investigation. Interestingly, his paper furthermore uncovers how different sectors of society are intertwined. In his account, the challenge of the ageing population is intimately linked to the cultural and creative sector, with cultural learning and participation presented as a part of the remedy. By establishing these connections Sacco helps us see a bigger picture while at the same time sparking our creative imagination. This is welcome because after all this issue is not just about older adults using heritage and creativity. Policy-makers and other stakeholders also need creativity in order to find innovative and sustainable solutions for the future.

It should be noted here that heritage institutions wanting to make an impact on a community level perhaps also have to consider groups of older adults they are currently interacting with. Many older adults take active part in programmes and events organised by heritage institutions and it is vital for the sector to nurture these existing relations. Older adults are great assets to our sector for example as living witnesses of past times, as ambassadors and, as in the case of volunteers, as fulfillers of tasks that would otherwise not have been performed. However, facing the challenge of the ageing population from the perspective of the heritage institution also means looking to other target groups within the larger groups of older adults – people who only rarely or never would visit a heritage institution. Heritage institutions must realise the differing conditions under which older adults lead their lives. Social and economic differences as well as inequalities related to health and well-being tend to increase, not decrease, as we pass into older adulthood. Thus this is something that heritage institutions with a social agenda need to pay extra attention too.

Heritage can offer learning opportunities for older adults with very diverse sets of interests and experience. What we need is not competition between methods trying to establish which one is the “best”. We have today a multitude of approaches, each with its own function, depending on the situation and by time I am sure we will see an even greater variety in the future.

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OLDER PEOPLE AS A DEVELOPING MARKET FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES

Abstract

There is an increasing number of older adults in Europe, which make them an important target group for museums. This article discusses how museums can be both inclusive and provide learning for older adults and at the same time see them as an important audience for commercial activities. Jamtli open air museum in Sweden serves as a case study.

Many heritage institutions have a double role in their communities: both as providers of services and learning and to be commercial tourist attractions. But is it morally acceptable for the heritage sector to see the growing population of senior citizens as a developing market? Not only as a new target group for social and learning activities but also for commercial activities?

There is a general belief that heritage sites and museums are always working objectively and neutrally and that they only show artefacts from the past. As most professionals know, this is not the case. Museums have always had more or less well defined aims. Often these aims have been political, such as fostering labourers, farmers and bourgeoisies or contributing towards a national or regional identity among people. More recently an aim has been to highlight various groups – such as workers, women and immigrants – and make sure that these groups are included in the museum's collections and exhibitions. (Zipsane 2011). Maybe the time has come for museums to include the group of older people in a more focused way? In this article, we will argue that it is acceptable to see older people as a target group for a wide range of activities, such as learning experiences, but that it is also acceptable to see them as a target group for commercial activities. The article will be based on our experiences from Jamtli open air museum in Sweden.

For a long period of time little attention was paid to senior citizens. Since

the 1960s, and forcefully from the 1970s, museums and other heritage institutions have developed and offered an increasing number of professional educational programs for children. This can probably be seen as an integrated part of UN policies as a reaction to change in western family patterns with decreasing birth rates (Cliquet 2008). It was probably also influenced by the high priority of competence development strongly promoted through initiatives from UNESCO and OECD, which at that time started investigating lifelong learning issues, including informal learning, for instance at museums (Ehlers 2007 and Bengtsson 2009). As government after government introduced higher educational standards and longer compulsory education, many institutions found a new mission. In several countries children and young people became an official high priority target group for cultural politics during the 1970s – in Sweden this became particularly emphasized with the labour government's cultural politics, passed in parliament in 1974. Interesting to note is that this priority was not changed by the right wing government when they, in 2007, began a highly profiled revision of the national cultural policy. In 2009, when this revision was finalized and passed in parliament, children and young people were still the only specific group in society selected for special attention from cultural institutions. Since the 1970s, politicians have also shown a particular interest for the heritage sector to include the history of women, immigrants and lately also people with disabilities into their exhibitions.

Since the beginning of the 21st Century a favourite concept among politicians has been promoting access. The political tools have, in a country such as Sweden, been a combination of directives through legislative means, enlightening conferences and stimulation through designated grants. All museums and other heritage institutions have followed these directives to a larger or lesser extent primarily to make sure that physical accessibility is ensured and that the museum's resources are digitised. It has worked in similar ways throughout Northern and Western Europe. Thus, what separates the group of children and youngsters compared to other prioritized groups is that this particular group has been prioritized through legislation and directives over a period of almost forty years, while other groups – such as immigrants – have been singled out for limited periods of time only. The priority of children and young people is always relevant and everybody knows it!

When, in the beginning of the 21st Century, the group of older people came into focus of attention, the situation was not so different from the situation that brought about the focus on children and young people four decades ago. The growing number of older people in Western society today is a challenge of the same magnitude and political significance as the falling birth rate was in the early 1970s. International and national authorities of

today, as well as contemporary research, focus intensively on the challenge of the ageing population. The group of people over 50 is growing in many parts of the world. In most of Western Europe 17–20 per cent of the population is above the age of 65 (Eurostat 2012). Other demographic changes are similarly important to consider. In many parts of Europe, especially in Eastern Europe, but also in some regions in Western Europe, there is an actual decrease in population numbers (Nordregio 2011). With a lesser, as well as older population, the group of people in their third age – that is, over fifty but active and healthy – are increasingly important to society and, consequently, to the heritage sector. It is also important not to identify these healthy and active “older adults” as “old”, they don't feel old and don't want to be like their parents' or grand parents' generation of old people. People, who are retired but active and in good general health, seek fun and meaningful activities. Yet an article in *The Economist* (2002) showed that few companies – we must assume that this also applies to most museums – have recognized the growing market of older people with money and time to spend. Most companies spend 95 per cent of their marketing on people under the age of 50 (*The Economist* 8th of August 2002).

How, then, can the heritage sector address this challenge of a growing number of older adults with time and money, who wants to stay healthy and active? An example from Sweden may illustrate the situation. Jamtli is an open air museum in the north of Sweden. The main target group is families with children, but there is an increasing amount of activities for older people being offered. The growing population of older people is a potential audience to Jamtli's commercial part if the right activities are offered. At the same time Jamtli has an important part to play both in providing learning activities and to support social inclusion for various audiences, including older people. So with the dual goal of being an attractive commercial arena, on the one hand, and supporting social inclusion and learning activities on the other, there are challenges in the ways the senior citizens should be regarded and what they should be offered. Another issue to consider is of course the fact that older adults are a heterogeneous group consisting of individuals with different needs and wishes. People do not suddenly develop the same interests just because they have turned 65 and retired from the labour market.

As described by Britt-Marie Borgström in her article “Museums and Memories – Stimulation of the Memory and Estimating Quality of Life” (this volume), Jamtli has chosen to run reminiscence activities as part of their engagement for social inclusion.

The target group consists of people who show signs of early stages of memory loss or even dementia. In collaboration with the local municipality

Jamtli welcomes a group of older adults each week to one of the small farm houses in the open air museum area. The seniors live in care centres and are accompanied by care professionals. The farm environment in the open air museum represents the 1940s and everything – from furniture, wallpaper and bisquets to music and His Majesty the King's speech in the radio – is as it once was. In this environment which represents the formative years of the seniors, they become active participants. The impact of this experience on their momentary and more general quality of life cannot be overestimated (Schweitzer 1995, Housden 2007 and Borgström 2010).

Another way of creating social inclusion, but also learning opportunities, is through volunteers. As many other museums – not least open air museums – Jamtli engage a vast number of volunteers and the majority of these are older adults who offer their special competences and devotion to the museum. They participate in many different activities such as crafts, serving visitors and role play. No doubt these activities are important both for Jamtli as a business and to the individual older person. Different studies show that the participating older people actually choose to be part of these activities because they get acknowledged for their competences, enjoy the feeling of being needed, and appreciate the social aspect. The volunteering older adults clearly gain from these activities, as does the museum. This engagement is also described in the article “Volunteers and Heritage” by Anna Hansen in this volume. (Milano, Gibbs & Sani 2009 and Hansen 2012).

Since learning is an important goal at Jamtli we also run a program called “After Work”. The target group here is retired people who are in relatively good health. They typically have time to spare for day-time activities and are interested in learning. Every Thursday afternoon Jamtli, together with the Regional State Archives of Östersund, offer a lecture, a guided tour, a film or some other activity based on cultural history. This offer is always free of charge and the program is very popular. After having run this program for four years we see that the museum's lecture hall often is too small and, as a consequence, we have started to offer an alternative lecture for those who miss the announced lecture due to lack of free seats. The audience is welcome to propose ideas for coming events as well as comment on previous ones. Each activity ends with an invitation to visit the hosting institutions and to participate in relevant courses, programs or other activities. It is clear that, for many people, “After Work” work as an eye opener and a possible gateway to other cultural heritage activities.

The above three presented examples of museum engagement with older people are quite common and will probably not be an issue for great disagreement in the sector. All three examples are activities which have been developed in order to reach older people with respect of the non-existent

homogeneity of that segment of the population. These activities are all part of the social responsibility and service to the community.

The ethical questions arise from the fourth example, which in itself contains two parts. During summertime, Jamtli museum offers a theme park experience with living history as one of the basic methods. In different historical environments the visitors can experience the daily life as it was in the region of Jämtland in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries.

The Jamtli environment closest to the time of today represents the year of 1975. In this environment the visitors meet with four different households: The middle class family of an army officer, his wife who works as a nurse, and their children; a younger couple who lives a hippie-inspired life with alternative values; and, finally, the two households of a retired couple and an older widow. These last households represent an innovation of the 1960s and 1970s, where municipalities in Northern Sweden, with the help of government grants, erected modern small apartments especially designed for older adults. These older people would otherwise have been left living alone in this sparsely populated area of the country, as their children left home and followed the trend of urbanization.

The visitors react with both nostalgia and surprise. Many of the visitors remember and recall the life of their own parents or grandparents in such circumstances when they see the furniture and not least the kitchen of the 1970s. Many visitors are also surprised to see the 1970s “already” included in the museum. Both reactions offer many comments to the museum staff. Among the comments there have been a few asking if the life of old people really is something to show or if showing this really is demanded (Zipsane 2012).

The 1975 environment serves a double purpose in connection to older people. First, it attracts tourists and other visitors who want to experience a time period they remember well. Nostalgia is important, and to be nostalgic about the 1970s you need to be at least 40 years old (but that age is of course increasing with every year). There is reason to try to create things that are attractive to older people. A recent study from Eurostat (2012) shows that older tourists are an increasing group and that the amounts of money they spend grow. In 2011, tourists over the age of 65 took 29 per cent more trips and spent 33 per cent more money compared to 2006, making their share of all tourists 20 per cent (Demunter, 2012). This means that people over 65 are an important group to focus on for heritage institutions. We need to provide them with experiences that are appealing to them, in order to make them visit, and more importantly; pay to visit.

The second purpose of the 1975 environment is to represent older people's lives, so that older people today can recognise that there have always been

people in their age-group, and to show how these people have lived. It is difficult to see why the heritage sector should not address the issue of the ageing population as actively as it has done in relation to children and young people. In offering older adults to experience how their own age group lived in historical times, museums use the same methods as they have done for many years already, when offering children to experience how it was to be in school in older times. The methods are well tested and can easily be adapted and applied to activities and exhibitions designed for new target groups. In the 1970s we have turned the historical lives of senior adults into a tourist attraction that people will pay to come and experience, with the thought that this could appeal to older adults.

A third and more temporary effect of the 1975 environment has to do with the creation of the environment in collaboration with older adults. Jamtli museum had great help in shaping the stories presented in the 1975 environment from the local community. Much work was dedicated to engage people, people who have given valuable and detailed information to the museum as well as objects. Most of these people were over the age of sixty. Their help has been invaluable to Jamtli, but in addition to this, their contribution has made them feel important. The fact that their histories are represented at the museum gives them a sense of ownership. Of course seeing part of their own stories or their own objects at the museum also makes them prone to visit the museum with friends and family.

The choice of representing older adults' lives, as well as the choice of representing a time period which is filled with nostalgia for people who are increasingly older, and the choice to involve many people in the creation are conscious choices with the aim of attracting more people in the third age to the museum, thus increasing the number of visitors and the income.

Jamtli is trying to support social inclusion, provide learning experiences, as well as offer commercial activities aimed at older people. Even though some studies show that many older people have time and money to spend there are also many older people who are not well off. Thus it is important not only to focus on wealthy older adults as visitors, but to provide a variety of activities with different aims. At Jamtli the distinction is primarily made between members of the community, who benefit from participating in various programs aimed at older people, and tourists, coming from other places which are considered a target group you can profit from. This distinction is also reflected in activities for other age-groups. In addition to different activities, museums can offer their visitors experience, knowledge and a sense of how life used to be for older people in different historical periods. The multifaceted character of a good museum experience can help stimulate attitudes based on understanding, respect and cohesion.

The increasing number of older people is an asset to society and a target group that the heritage sector must address. It is clearly a developing market, both for activities with learning and social cohesion as their overall objectives, and for commercial activities; both to show what older people's lives were like in the past, and to acknowledge older adults as important paying visitors.

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EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF PARTICIPATORY ARTS ON OLDER PEOPLE: WHAT THE RESEARCH LITERATURE TELLS US

Abstract

There has been increasing international interest in the role of participatory arts in improving the health and wellbeing of older people. This article draws from the findings of a 2011 systematic review of the research literature to share what is currently known about the impact of arts participation on older individuals, the communities in which they live and on societal perceptions of older people and ageing. It will highlight some examples of innovative arts projects for older people, and explore the role arts participation can play, particularly for older people with dementia. The article will conclude with a series of recommendations for how service providers, governments, commissioners, funders and researchers can support the development of arts participation for the benefit of older people and society at large.

Background

Europe has an ageing population.⁴⁶ This demographic change brings about some specific challenges, relating to the health and wellbeing of a growing older population. As people age, they become more susceptible to poor health and disability, social isolation and poverty.⁴⁷ Going forward, it has

⁴⁶ Commission of the European Communities, “The demographic future of Europe – from challenge to opportunity,” (Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, 2006).

⁴⁷ World Health Organisation Regional Office for Europe, *Strategy and Action Plan for Healthy Ageing in Europe, 2012–2020* (Copenhagen: World Health Organisation Regional Office for Europe, 2012).

been suggested that responding to these issues will necessitate a sharp increase in public spending on both health and social care.⁴⁸

In response to the financial consequences of ageing there has been considerable attention paid by governments and policy makers on how to keep older people well, active and engaged for longer.⁴⁹ Creativity and arts participation is clearly one means of enabling older people to stay engaged, whether through painting and visual arts classes, dancing and theatre to singing groups within residential care settings. However, with public funding for arts currently under threat across many countries in Europe, there is an urgent need to identify and convey the impact arts participation can have on older people: to identify what makes arts participation effective, and to marshal the arguments for arts activities as a health improvement exercise.

This paper presents the findings from a systematic review of the evidence base of participatory arts for older people.⁵⁰ The aim of this review was to bring together the highest quality of evidence available to explore the central research question: “In what ways does participating in art impact on the wellbeing of older people and the ways older people are perceived by the communities in which they live and society in general?” It was hoped that the findings from the review would help assist funders, arts organisations and those who support them to improve and extend their work with older people, and support further research in this area to build the evidence base further.

Methodology

The literature search followed a stepwise methodology to identify the highest quality research available (literature reviews and primary research).

Inclusion criteria

The review included articles which focused on older people aged over 60 years of age and which explored the impact of participatory arts activities. Participatory arts was defined as follows: “Professional artists collaborate with people to create original artistic works that relate to and/or express to others the participants’ experience, outlook and/or community context in some way. Participants can be involved in the planning, development and in some cases evaluation of the project along with the project staff.”

⁴⁸ Commission of the European Communities, “The demographic future of Europe – from challenge to opportunity.”

⁴⁹ World Health Organisation, *Active Ageing: A Policy Framework* (World Health Organisation, 2002).

⁵⁰ The review was funded by the Baring Foundation in 2011, as part of their Arts and Older People Programme.

To ensure relevance, reviews must have been published in the English language between January 2001 and May 2011. The review included studies from the UK and from other countries where the activities and learning were culturally transferrable, for example, Europe, New Zealand, Australia, USA, and Canada.

Exclusion criteria

The review did not include all methods of art delivery. The review excluded art therapies, for example, which has its own considerable evidence base. It also excluded audience participation, listening to music or the playing of background music within residential care settings, which did not meet our criteria for “participatory arts”. Finally the review did not include literature on dance-based aerobic exercise, where the artistic input is often minimal.

Data screening

A total of 511 articles were identified and following a systematic screening and data extraction process, 24 peer reviewed articles (1 review and 23 primary studies) were selected for inclusion in this review, including one literature review. In addition a search for good quality grey literature (unpublished and/or non-peer reviewed) to cover identified gaps in the peer reviewed evidence base was also undertaken via an internet search and a request for publications from the Baring Foundation’s extensive contacts. Seventy two publications were retrieved through this process, of which seven have been included in the review. All studies selected for inclusion in the review were subjected to assessments of their quality and relevance to the UK.

Results

The review included 31 studies and 2040 participants (based on the 26 of 31 studies that did state the number of participants).⁵¹ Most of the studies were based in the UK (n=17), 7 were from USA, 3 were Australian, and one each from Canada, Spain and Sweden. The literature review did not provide information about the countries of origin of the research articles reviewed.

The studies all included populations of people over the age of 60 years. The age range for this review is 60 to 96 years. Eleven of the studies included participants that were primarily female the rest were mixed and the gender balance was not reported. Whilst most of the studies were of older people who were in generally good health, six of the studies involved people with

⁵¹ See Table 1 for a summary of all the papers included in the review

dementia, usually in a residential or day care setting. The included studies cover the following art forms:

Music (n=7).
Singing (n=7).
Drama (n=5).
Visual arts (n=5).
Dance (n=4).
Storytelling (n=1).
Festivals (n=1).
Mixed art forms (1)

Fifteen of the studies employed qualitative methodologies to research impact (interviews, focus groups, observation etc.), 7 quantitative (standardised measures, surveys etc.) and 3 used both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Most of the studies (n=29) considered the impact of participatory arts at an individual level (for example biological, psychological and behavioural). Mental health and emotional impacts found often included increased self-esteem and confidence. Positive feedback received from family, friends and communities in response to performances, exhibitions and productions appeared to offer a particularly powerful boost to emotional wellbeing. This was a common finding across all the different art forms.

The key impacts that the evidence in this review indicate are summarised below. The strength of the existing evidence should be considered in the context of its many limitations. Participatory arts is a new and emerging research field, with little available high quality research to draw evidence from; this makes drawing conclusions from the cumulative effect of a number of studies, or comparing the impacts of one art form against another difficult.

Impact on the Individual

The impacts evidenced in the papers included in this review related to changes with regards to mental wellbeing, physical health, communities and changes at a societal level.

Mental wellbeing

“I really never thought I had any art talent to develop and now I hope to further what I’ve learnt.”

(Harper & Hamblin, 2010)

Twenty eight of the articles focussed on impacts relating to mental wellbeing. These impacts were primarily focused around perceived increases in confidence and self-esteem. Change was attributed to participants exceeding their own personal expectations about what they could achieve, or the opportunity they had been given to embrace new and positive identities and life roles. Whatever the art form engaged with, there appeared to be added value to be gained from performing to an audience, in terms of participants’ feelings of accomplishment through the positive feedback they received.

The evidence indicated that involvement in community arts initiatives may be particularly important in counterbalancing the mental wellbeing difficulties associated with periods of loss, which can increase the risk of low mood, anxiety and social isolation. For older adults with dementia, the review also found evidence that participatory arts could help to improve cognitive functioning, communication, pleasure, enjoyment of life, memory and creative thinking.

However, becoming involved in art activities could potentially cause frustration when individuals found that they were not able to meet their own expectations (or what they perceived to be others’ expectations) of achieving a desired standard of artistic expression or skill. Obtaining the appropriate level of artistic challenge therefore appeared to be one key to success.

Spotlight: New Horizons Band Programme, New York (Dabback, 2008)

New Horizons is a professionally led music programme for older people. Focus groups held with 22 of the 100 band members found that participating in the band enabled older people to form positive new post retirement identities as musicians. Being part of the band, with regular rehearsal times, gave structure and routine to members. For New Horizon players, life still held promise and opportunities to explore new paths.

Physical wellbeing

‘People come with their aches and pains...and then they do two and a half hours of dancing and they don’t feel a thing’

(Cooper, 2002)

Eleven studies focused on the physical health impacts of older peoples’ participation in art activities. Health improvements were found relating to cardio-vascular health, joint mobility and breathing control. It was clear that particular art forms, such as dance, singing and playing musical instruments, could by their nature lend themselves more to physical health improvements

than others. However, there was also some evidence that absorption in the creative process (regardless of the medium) could lead to an increase in the levels of general daily activity amongst older participants which could ultimately have a positive effect on physical wellbeing.

Spotlight: Social Dancing Clubs, South East England (Cooper, 2002)

Cooper (2002) explores the experiences of social dancers (modern sequence and ballroom dancing) at three clubs in South East England. Social dancing was found to give participants a sense of continuity in their lives through engagement with familiar cultural touchstones (for example well known dances and pieces of music). Social dancing also helped to create both real and perceived increases in fitness levels amongst participants and could help to confound stereotypes of older people as physically unappealing.

Communities

Eleven of the studies in this review provided evidence of the impacts that participatory arts for older people could have at a community level. There was clear evidence that participatory arts programmes provided opportunities for meaningful social contact, friendship and support within the art groups themselves as well as improving relationships within settings such as care homes and prisons.

Some participants in qualitative studies described how participating in arts activities could offer a means of 'giving something back', whether to family and friends through the production of gifts, or to specific sections of the community through for example playing concerts in care homes. Such activities were perceived to have a positive impact on community beneficiaries as well as for the individuals participating in the art.

In day and residential care settings participatory arts was found to foster a better sense of social cohesion and community, particularly for those with dementia. Where individuals with dementia participated in art activities alongside staff and carers, relationships were seen to improve overall. Carers identified an increased sense of fellowship within care homes and described how arts activities raised expectations about the abilities and aptitudes of people with dementia, which worked to improve the depth and quality of the overall care relationship.

Spotlight: Community Theatre, Pyman 2006

Participation in a community theatrical production was found by Pyman (2006) to have a number of beneficial impacts on the older people involved and on the community in which they lived. Recently

bereaved members of the company valued the opportunity to make new friends in a supportive environment, and the sense of "community spirit" fostered. Participants felt that productions raised the profile of the local village within the surrounding area and contributed to a sense of belonging and to the unique identity of the community (for example, the performance included scenes from local history and local landmarks).

Society

"It's reassuring to think that you can still be sort of creative and feisty and funny at 96"

(Ni Leime, 2008)

Four studies explored the societal impacts of participatory arts for older people. Participatory arts were seen as a powerful tool that could contribute towards challenging and breaking down both the self and external stigmas of being older that pervade popular societal culture. Participatory arts could also be used to bring people together in a way that helps individuals in marginalised groups mitigate the negative effects of stigma and self-doubt on their wellbeing. Large scale, high profile festivals, like the Bealtaine Festival in Ireland, have the potential to positively transform attitudes to older people; particularly when intergenerational events are included in the festival.

Spotlight: Bealtaine Festival, Ireland (Ni Leime, 2008)

The Bealtaine festival is a month long arts festival for older people, which takes place throughout Ireland in May every year. In 2007 there were over 7000 events involving approximately 51,000 participants. Events include dance, drama, film, creative writing, storytelling, visual arts and puppetry. The high profile of the event nationally promoted more positive perceptions of ageing for audience members, participants, facilitators and society in general. It also provided opportunity for enjoyment and celebration of the arts amongst older people.

Conclusions and recommendations

The beneficial impact of participatory arts in terms of mental and physical wellbeing is evident at the individual, community and societal levels. Although the evidence base is relatively weak, it suggests that there is tremendous potential for participatory arts to improve the quality of life of older people in general as well as those older people who are most excluded including those with dementia, those who are socially and economically disadvantaged,

LGBT groups and prisoners. However, the needs of older people and the potential benefits of participatory arts in promoting wellbeing amongst older people continue to be generally overlooked in policy and service provision.

The review makes the following recommendations for research, policy and practice:

Access to participatory arts projects for older people should be more actively supported by local health and mental health improvement agencies and organisations

Specialist health and social care planners and providers should consider ways in which they can improve access to participatory arts for more vulnerable older adults. Day and residential care services should explore the skilling up of day and residential care home staff to undertake participatory art with older people.

To maximise engagement, participatory arts projects need to actively facilitate initial and sustained participation by older people, taking account of the health and social inequalities that older people face and the consequent barriers that later life can impose on their motivation or ability to attend.

Participatory arts projects for older people should challenge the potential for low expectations and over-emphasis of the limitations of old age on the ability of older people to participate and create

Local authorities, national government, arts and community services funders who fund participatory arts projects should ensure that tenders, funding applications, and funding agreements are “age proofed”. This should ensure that they reach out, are accessible, and are used by older people. Funders need to proactively be inclusive of older people with mental health problems, long term conditions such as dementia and other disabilities, and older people who are ‘hard to reach’, such as people living alone, living in care homes, and from ‘hard to reach’ groups e.g. Black, Asian and ethnic minorities.

Those commissioning and funding participatory arts projects should recognise the importance of funding evaluation.

Further good quality research and evaluation of participatory arts activities is needed. Larger samples and longitudinal impact studies are required to provide better strength of evidence. There is also a need for a forum for the sharing of research findings amongst practitioners and policy makers to prevent duplication and promote learning.

Further research is also required to provide more detail about the key elements of the participatory arts activity processes. This would produce a better understanding of what makes the successful projects work well as well as what impedes them and what advances the possibility of replication and the spread of innovations.

Further information

An Evidence Review of the Impact of Participatory Arts on Older People (2011) is available free to download from: http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/content/assets/PDF/publications/evidence_review_participatory_arts?view=Standard

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Author / year	Population details	Life point	Gender	No. Participants	UK relevance	Art form	Impacts	Influencing factors
Barnes, 2010	UK	>50	Primarily female	Unclear	Yes	Dance	Physical, mental, social	Rural isolation
Brownell, 2008	Dementia in care Southern USA	>60	90% female	40	Yes	Visual arts	Cognitive, Mood, Levels of engagement	dementia
Bungay & Skingley, 2008	UK	>60	71% female	17 participants & 48 facilitators, volunteers etc	Yes	Singing	Mental, physical, social, cognitive	deprivation
Castora-Binkley, 2010	Systematic review so various	>65	Both	721	Yes	Drama, Music Singing, Visual arts, Dance	Physical and mental health	Dementia
Cohen, 2007	USA (mostly white women)	>60 (av. age 79)	82% female	128	Yes	Singing	Physical, mental, social activities	social return on investment
Cooper, 2002	UK	>60	Both	31	Yes	Dance	social networks, self-esteem, physical health	social class, barriers: disability
Dabback, 2008	USA	>65	Both	22? - Unclear	Yes	Music	mental, community, social networks	gender, retirement
De Viggiani, 2010	Older prisoners (from 4 male prisons and 2 female prisons), UK	Older adults	Both	80	Yes	Music	Mental, social, community, societal	Prison setting, stigma
Hafford-Letchfield, 2010	UK, Older people and social work students	>60	Both	Unclear	Yes	Drama	societal - perceptions of older people	LGBT, power
Harper & Hamblin, 2010	UK	Older adults	Both	Unclear	Yes	Visual arts	Mental, social	Gender
Hays, 2006	Australia	>65	Both	38	Yes	Music	physical, mental, social	chronic illness, caring
Hillman, 2002	UK	females aged over 60 / males aged over 65	80% female	75	Yes	Singing	physical, mental, social	low income groups
Holm, 2003	Dementia patients in a care home in Sweden	>60	Primarily female	12 patients (73-95 years) & 7 caregivers (nursing home staff)	Yes	Drama	Mental, community	Dementia, caregivers
Hui, 2010	UK	>60	Both	Doesn't state	Yes	Dance	Mental, physical, community	BME
Johnson, 2011	UK	Intergenerational	Both	4 older choir members, 3 children, 50 audience members	Yes	Drama	Social, societal – perceptions of older people,	
Kinney, 2005	Dementia attending one of two Adult Day Centres in USA	>65	Both	12 (5 men, 7 women) (5 BME, 7 white)	Yes	Visual arts	Wellbeing	Dementia
Lally, 2009	Australia	51 - 83 (63% aged > 60)	Both	19	Yes	Singing	Mental, physical, social	
Martin, 2004	Dementia in nursing home / day care facility in Canada.	Older Adults (ave. ages 84 / 78)	Both	Client group of 117 but unclear exactly how many of these participated	Yes	Music	Mental, community	dementia

Author / year	Population details	Life point	Gender	No. Participants	UK relevance	Art form	Impacts	Influencing factors
Murray, 2010	Deprived urban white British origin community in UK	>50 (age range 51-83)	Both	11 (4 male, 7 female)	Yes	Visual arts	community	deprivation
Murray, Lamont & Hale, undated	UK	>50	Both	11	Yes	Singing	Mental, physical, social, community	isolation
Ni Léime, 2008	Bealtaine Festival participants, Ireland	Older adults	Both	253 older festival participants, 103 older audience members	Yes	Festival	mental, community, societal	Rural isolation
Noice, 2009	USA, Low income	>65(age range 68-93)	80% women	122	Yes	Drama	memory, personal growth	low income groups
Phillips, 2010	USA, 56 older people aged 60+ with dementia Control group moderate cognitive impairment.	Older Adults	88% female	56 (28 intervention group, 28 control)	Yes	Storytelling	Cognitive, mood	dementia
Pyman, 2006	UK Members of amateur community theatre company	>60	Both	8 participants (5 women, 3 men)	Yes	Drama	mental, community	bereavement, rural isolation
Reynolds, 2010	UK older women	>60 (age range 60-86)	Female	32	Yes	Visual arts	Mental, community	women, retirement
Sixsmith, 2007	UK, people with dementia living at home and in residential care	>60 (age range 62-96)	Both	26 (70% women)	Yes	Music	Mental, community	dementia
Sole, 2010	Spain	>65	83% female	83 - choir (52), music appreciation (19), music therapy (12)	Yes	Singing	Quality of life	
Southcott, 2009	Members of the Happy Wanderers (older people's singing group in Australia)	>60	Both	3	Yes	Singing	Community, mental	dementia, volunteering
Stacey, 2008	UK, Socially isolated older women	62-93	Primarily female	8 (plus 1 group facilitator)	Yes	Dance	emotional, confidence, physical, social networks	social isolation, women, communities
Taylor, 2008	UK Adult learners	>60	Both	8	Yes	Music	confidence, self esteem	
Taylor, 2010	UK 6 mature amateur pianists (researcher one of participants)	>65	Both	6	Yes	Music	confidence, self esteem	

CRAVING CREATIVITY IN LATER LIFE

Abstract

The societal norms of ageing and old age are changing in society today, due to demographic changes that favour a pedagogicalization of society, focusing on the management of human resources throughout the entire lifespan. The discourse on active ageing not only reveals 'better' ways of ageing but it also raises questions as to what constitutes a 'good' and 'active' life in all societies. The conflicting aspect of the discursive battlefield on active ageing constitutes a fight for authority: Who has the 'right' to define the meaning of being 'active' and how can 'activity' be identified? 'Active' is to be understood according to the interpretations available in different knowledge perspectives in order to discipline the future knowledge production of ageing and control the processes of subjectification in later life as the disciplining of 'Population Ageing': Becoming a subject to active ageing. Dominant discourses on 'active ageing' are challenged by the focus of museums and archives on using heritage and participatory arts as an arena to perform AGE in later life by craving creativity as a notion of age and opportunity.

The will to creativity in later life

In this article, I use the verb *craving* as an understanding of longing for... wanting so badly... creativity in later life. I use the notion of 'craving' in order to elaborate the tendency to focus on creativity as a necessary approach to life in contemporary ageing societies. According to Grierson:

Creativity has become the now familiar condition of our times, a generalised code or signifier for innovation growth in the global economics of knowledge transfer where fast exchange of knowledge and capital have become the norm for an informationalised world. Creativity is now synonymous with economic productivity and the human subject undergoes transformations of identity as an entrepreneurial self.⁵²

⁵² Elizabeth Grierson, "Art and Creativity in the Global Economies of Education," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 43, no. 4 (2011).

When societies emphasise creativity as a self-evident condition, this also has an impact on contemporary ageing societies, because creativity would appear to be the solution to overcoming the economic crises in relation to demographic changes. The continuing of a creative lifestyle in later life transforms the ageing subject into an entrepreneurial self and discharges the emphasis on "ageing" as "decline" in later life. Becoming an entrepreneurial self in later life debunks the master narrative of ageing as a decline narrative according to the bio-medical model of ageing.⁵³

During the last decade or so we have seen several initiatives in the cultural heritage sector take up the notion on creativity as a way of offering older adults the ability to perform activities in later life in cultural heritage institutions. Emphasising creativity and ageing in this context becomes a self-evident issue, because this arena already performs creativity in all its activities, and when older adults become the new target group in this context⁵⁴ the combination of creativity and ageing becomes almost naturalised. When older adults crave creativity in later life, it could be seen as a way of protesting against the 'decline narrative' and sustaining citizenship into later life: the cultural heritage sector becomes the arena for this protest and functions as a place to perform age as an entrepreneurial self – a social self that is included rather than excluded from society despite possible bodily 'decline'. Cultural heritage institutions offer older adults an inclusive approach to their citizenship because they allow them to continue to be citizens – citizens that continue to be creative in later life.

Creativity and ageing has been theorised as *creative ageing* by Cohen⁵⁵ in his book on the creative age. Creative ageing opens up a new way of becoming and living in later life that is somewhat different from the naturalized focus upon the dominant ageing discourse of contemporary ageing societies. Creative ageing allows us to introduce a different understanding of contem-

⁵³ Tine Frstrup, "Gerontopedagogicalization: A critical approach to performAGE in later life," in *Social Pedagogy for the Entire Lifespan Volume II, Studies in Comparative Social Pedagogies and International Social Work and Social Policy, Vol. XVIII*, ed. Jacob Kornbeck and Niels Rosendal Jensen (Bremen: Europäischer Hochschulverlag GmbH & Co. KG, 2012).

⁵⁴ Henrik Zipsane, "Lifelong Learning through Heritage and Art," in *The Routledge International Handbook of Lifelong Learning*, ed. Peter Jarvis (London: Routledge, 2008); T. Frstrup et al., "Heritage Learning Outcomes in the Nordic and Baltic Area. Competence Development among Adults at Archives and Museums. Guidelines.," (Östersund: The Nordic Center of Heritage Learning and the Nordplus Adult Project "Heritage Learning Outcomes in the Nordic and Baltic Area, 2012).

⁵⁵ G. D. Cohen, "The Creative Age: Awakening Human Potential in the Second Half of Life," (New York: Quill – an Imprint of Harper Collins Publishers, 2000).

porary ageing. Later life could be understood as an arena of social and cultural change that make the designation of old age problematic.⁵⁶

The distinction between adult life and old age becomes unstable in contemporary ageing societies due to the reconfiguration of old age that follows the destandardisation of the modern life course. It means that we are moving away from predictable stages in life and instead entering unstable and flexible life courses. There are no longer guidelines to follow in relation to ageing, because these guidelines follow the norms of the population in relation to the economic rationale that emphasises the entrepreneurial self. The role models you look for in later life are those people who perform age according to the entrepreneurial self – the creative older adults become the ones that are worth imitating. With no prescript for ageing you write the script as you go along in later life, being inspired by other people living desirable (read: creative) later lives. If later life is to be understood as an arena of change the notion of creativity becomes relevant, because you have to create the content of later life in order to become a person living out later life through the economic rationale. ‘Becoming’ cannot be separated from creativity because creativity functions as a way of becoming a socially acceptable older adult. The rapidly changing part of the later life course needs to be given attention in order to explore new ways of ‘becoming’ in later life, as well as the way in which the notion of creativity in later life has become the new identity marker in demonstrating responsible citizenship via a continuation of the entrepreneurial selfhood through the focus upon personal growth and change as a time for self expression.

When creativity becomes the marker for how to live your life in later life you crave creativity because you long for a humanized old age that acts as a protest against the dehumanization of old age following the standardized life course. Creative ageing becomes the demarcation of ‘ageing’ which is surrounded by the ‘master narrative’ of old age in relation to the bio-medical model which perceives ageing as a pathological “problem” tied to discourses of “decline”, “dependency”, “decay”, “abnormality” and “deterioration”.⁵⁷ Thus, the problem orientation to ageing is historically configured in “bio-medical sciences and discourses” which specialize in the terminology of ger-

⁵⁶ P. Higgs, “Later Life as an Arena of Change,” in *Researching later life and ageing. Expanding qualitative research horizons*, ed. Miranda Leontowitsch (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

⁵⁷ C. Phillipson, *Reconstructing Old Age: New Agendas in Social Theory and Practice* (London: SAGE, 1998).

ontology.⁵⁸ The bio-medical model of ageing becomes a discourse on the knowledge of ageing – a knowledge that offers a perspective on the process of ageing that you cannot question. If you question the bio-medical approach to ageing, you become subject to denial, and you seek out comparisons with other seniors who do not look as young (as you) in order to help yourself to feel better about ageing.⁵⁹ In the bio-medical model you have to adapt to the nature of ageing – the inescapable nature that holds the truth about ageing. But the nature of ageing subscribes to the idea of ‘normal’ ageing, not to the idea of natural ageing. In the distinction between ‘natural’ and ‘normal’ ageing, with the former associated with a cultural ideal of old age as a time of physical and mental decline, and the latter associated with an increasing emphasis on maintaining norms of self-care aimed at delaying or denying such a decline.⁶⁰

The agenda of choice and agency in contemporary ageing unfolds itself as a transformation of the ways in which old age is being experienced by older adults throughout the world. Drawing on my previous work on the phenomenon of *gerontopedagogicalization*⁶¹, I want to unravel creative ageing as a process of becoming an entrepreneurial self in later life, elaborated as *performAGE*; ways of performing age in later life.⁶² Performing the entrepreneurial self due to societal norms in contemporary societies is one way of performing age in later life whilst performing the disengaged self is another option. It may appear as if the older person has a choice in choosing between “selves” in later life, but this is not the case in every situation – it depends upon how you have lived your life before entering later life.

The will to be creative in later life enables older adults to perform age as a way of demonstrating an existence of anti-decline that is socially distributed in contemporary ageing societies. Gerontopedagogicalization becomes the process of becoming an ageing self in order to maintain the sense of a continuous and creative self⁶³ in the era of individualization and pedagogi-

⁵⁸ S. & Powell Biggs, J.L., “A Foucauldian Analysis of Old Age and the Power of Social Welfare,” *Journal of Ageing and Social Policy* 12, no. 2 (2001).

⁵⁹ H.R. Moody and S. Sood, “Age Branding,” in *The Ageing Consumer: Perspectives from Psychology and Economics*, ed. A. Drolet, N. Schwarz, and C. Yoon (London: Routledge, 2010).

⁶⁰ P. Higgs et al., “Not just old and sick – the ‘will to health’ in later life,” *Ageing & Society* 29 (2009).

⁶¹ Fristrup, “Gerontopedagogicalization: A critical approach to performAGE in later life.”

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ S. R. Kaufman, *The Ageless Self: Sources of Meaning in Later Life* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1986).

calization of late modern life. Gerontopedagogicalization offers a perspective on ageing that strives to reflect the hegemonic structures of the discourses on ageing as inescapable subject positions, setting the scene and controlling the way we read our lives by posing the statement: People performAGE by negotiAGEING in contemporary ageing societies.

Creative ageing unfolds ageing as a learning process in arenas of change, involving older adults in the changing nature of old age. Researching the changing nature of ageing calls for a demarcation of the narrative of decline associated with the effects of the ageing process. We need research approaches that move beyond the boundaries of the bio-medical and unfold the contexts of ageing in which later life now is being experienced. One such context is the cultural heritage sector. This sector, combined with the notion on creativity, offers a new approach to research through the concept of 'heritage learning'.⁶⁴ 'Heritage learning' offers a way of maintaining citizenship in later life: when older adults learn through heritage and have the opportunity to demonstrate the entrepreneurial selfhood and at the same time protest against the dominant decline narrative.

The will to health in later life

Societies age globally⁶⁵ and in the year 2015 it is predicted that there will be more people over the age of 65 than children under the age of 5 in the world. For the first time in history we face a situation the young and the old people takes on new proportions and dimensions in regard to the ordering of society due to the social ordering of population ageing. Classifying societies worldwide as 'ageing societies' draws attention to age as an important factor in understanding the transitions of society and the transformations of the social.

The interesting thing is that the attention to age differs from the macro level to the micro level. In relation to the macro level, age becomes an important factor in understanding the societal aspects of ageing societies, but the same factor becomes less important at the micro level – at this level you might even say that age does not matter at all, because age is a marker of the decline narrative. Consequently we need to go beyond the stigmatisation stemming from the master narrative categorisation of age. The difference between global ageing and local ageing follows the notion of the distinction between the macro level and the micro level.

⁶⁴ Frstrup et al., "Heritage Learning Outcomes in the Nordic and Baltic Area. Competence Development among Adults at Archives and Museums. Guidelines."

⁶⁵ J.L. Powell, *Ageing, Theory and Globalization* (New York: NOVA Science Publishers, Inc., 2011).

Living longer lives (longevity) becomes the new grounding of the social or the self-evident issue of contemporary and future ageing societies. The problem is that we only have old images of ageing and old age that deals exclusively with a narrative of decline. We as a society need new images of ageing and old age that deals with the will to developmentalism in relation to the competitive state.⁶⁶ We all need to become creative subjects in a new social order – not just to be in order and live longer lives but to live longer and better lives than the generations before us.

In the Vision Paper of the Joint Programming Initiative *More Years, Better Lives: The Potential and Challenges of Demographic Change*, EU: February 2011, p. 8 it is stated that:

Continuing the very desirable trend of rising life expectancy on the one hand and falling birth rates on the other have led to a clear shift in the population's age structure. This shift is often referred to as demographic change. It is one of the most determining megatrends all over the world. Whereas only a few nations/world regions show a juvenescence of their societies (e. g. Arabian countries, India, but as well Ireland), the majority of countries are marked by ageing populations. Many countries that were typically characterised by high birth rates have turned – sometimes rapidly – into the opposite. This demographic trend has an exceptional impact also on Europe. In fact, some of the most dramatically changing nations are European. Hence, the perspective of each Member State and consequently that of the European Union as a political, economic and social entity will be affected by this transition. As politics, economy and social welfare are strongly related, it is desirable to find a common approach and to join forces to face the megatrend of demographic change. By unleashing its potential and by reacting appropriately to the changing circumstances that come with an ageing population, challenges can be mastered before they turn into a problem. Demographic change will affect several social sectors and contexts. In account of this, it will influence people's understanding of inclusion, participation, welfare, equality, and the life course, or – in other words – the character and the self-concept of society and its members. In order to guarantee and further develop the future of Europe as an idea and a reality, approaches to demographic change

⁶⁶ O. K. Pedersen, *Konkurrencestaten. (The Competitive State)* (Copenhagen: Hans Reitzels Forlag, 2011).

*need an active participation of politics, public authorities, economy, and research as well as of each individual.*⁶⁷

Performing age in later life subscribes in this European Vision Paper to the notion on the societal necessity to be able to develop all human potential in order to meet the challenges of demographic change in Europe. The linkage between creativity and ageing becomes in this approach a question about how to manage the human potential in later life. Creative ageing deals with this kind of management and creative ageing becomes a self-technology in order to sustain the agentic self in later life. Creative ageing unfolds in arenas of change and focuses upon learning environments as a pedagogical tool to uncover the human potential in later life's creative activities.

In the health imperative creative ageing becomes a way of postponing the markers of a fourth age as stipulated by the decline narrative. The will to health does not challenge or debunk the narrative of decline in bio-medicine; instead the discourse on bio-medicine inhabits both, the construction of the problem and the solution to the problem. 'Performing age' as the 'will to health' inherits the activity theory from the 1950s and validates it as contemporary ageing through the discourse on active ageing.

The end of the 'Golden Age' of welfare capitalism in the 1970s was the prelude to a period of greater individualisation within societies and was accompanied by an increase in the importance of consumption as a way of organising social relations. During the same period there was also an expansion in the discourses aimed at enhancing the government of the autonomous self. One such discourse operates around what has been termed the 'will to health': it suggests that health has become a required goal for individual behaviour and has become synonymous with health itself. The generational groups whose life courses were most exposed to these changes are now approaching later life. We explore the extent to which social transformations related to risk, consumption and individualisation are reflected in the construction of later-life identities around health and ageing. We examine how the growth in health-related 'technologies of the self' have fostered a distinction between natural and normal ageing, wherein the former is associated with coming to terms with

⁶⁷ Better Lives" Joint Programming Initiative "More Years, "Vision Paper of the Joint Programming Initiative More Years, Better Lives: The Potential and Challenges of Demographic Change," JPI "More Years, Better Lives".

*physical decline and the latter associated with maintaining norms of self-care aimed at delaying such decline.*⁶⁸

This distinction between 'natural ageing' and 'normal ageing' makes it possible to elaborate contemporary ageing as normal ageing: that is, related to the ageing process as a notion of opportunity-making that involves taking risks. The construction of third age identities involves postponing the markers of a fourth age. Being able to distance the fourth age by demonstrating third age identity implies a commitment to normal ageing as the will to health in later life.

Today's societal rejection of natural ageing has fostered an industry of self-technologies as health technologies by excluding those self-technologies that do not support the will to health. All social behaviour under these circumstances become defined and legitimised in terms of a rational calculation of costs and benefits of competing choices and potential risks. Freedom becomes the capacity for self-realisation through individual actions in the face of multiple risks and opportunities. Ageing and the hazards of growing older form another arena in which the autonomous self is expected to act and to make the right choices. The growth in technologies aimed at enhancing the government of the autonomous self has attracted comments.⁶⁹ What has received less attention is the way in which the reconstruction of contemporary later life has elaborated that these responsibilities and techniques have become part of the generational habitus of the first cohorts to engage fully with reflexive modernisation throughout their lives as they age.

If we are to understand better why older people may or may not engage with health technologies, we need to see older people as members of generations that both instigated and experienced the rise of consumer society and not as a homogeneous and passive group entering a stable and predictable stage of the life course. Research is required in order to establish whether and how the structural developments outlined in this paper shape older people's engagement with the will to health. For instance, we need to ask what are older people's personal preferences as well as their consumer choices; what are their financial priorities and what is their awareness of change regarding health care, the body and the nature of ageing. In this new agenda of research on later life, the focus needs to go beyond

⁶⁸ Higgs et al., "Not just old and sick – the 'will to health' in later life".

⁶⁹ N. Rose, *The Politics of Life Itself* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).

*understanding older people as merely old and sick. Instead, the new realities of ageing in a consumer society can steer research towards examining the potential of older people to engage in agency at both the level of society in general and at the level of personal health concerns.*⁷⁰

In 2002 the WHO⁷¹ developed the concept of 'healthy ageing' into the concept of 'active ageing' figuring the life course perspective as an opposition to the OECD's focus on 'active ageing' as a zero sum perspective figuring employability due to the economics of ageing. The notion of active ageing develops into a discourse dominated by the healthy ageing approach articulated by a bio-medical discourse on ageing dealing with the decline narrative and the concept of successful ageing which began in the late 1950s and the theory of active ageing from the beginning of the 1960s which critiqued the theory of disengagement.

'Healthy ageing' and 'active ageing' collapse into one discourse dominated by the will to health. My point is that active ageing is a broader perspective on ageing than healthy ageing: it deploys the will to empower, and not just the will to health. The same process is activated by 'creative ageing' in relation to the cultural heritage sector and its contribution of heritage learning to the learning age.⁷²

Contemporary societies featuring the learning age, and relating to the discourse on lifelong learning, make it possible to articulate creative ageing within a broader perspective than healthy ageing allows for: a creative practice, another way of legitimising activity in later life; a learning practice, focusing on empowerment as a political, rather than a medical, approach. The medical approach is being challenged by the political approach to creative ageing by focusing upon citizenship and performAGE as a way of re-creating citizenship in later life.

Going through the latest literature review on 'art and ageing', Cohen's work on creative ageing is of particular note in that it emphasises and legitimises the use of creative activities in relation to an improvement of the outcomes of healthy ageing.⁷³ Health improvement in older people becomes the main outcome of the activities, and empowerment is articulated in relation

⁷⁰ Higgs et al., "Not just old and sick – the 'will to health' in later life.."

⁷¹ World Health Organisation, *Active Ageing: A Policy Framework* (World Health Organisation, 2002).

⁷² Zipsane, "Lifelong Learning through Heritage and Art."

⁷³ Mental health foundation, "An Evidence Review of the impact of participatory arts on older people," <http://www.baringfoundation.org.uk/EvidenceReview.pdf>.

to health. Within Cohen's work the political dimension of empowerment is not the central aspect of creative ageing.⁷⁴ According to Cohen creative ageing is the cure to the social problems of demographic change through the focus on legitimising creativity in relation to healthy ageing. Even though this focus is upon the awakening of the human potential, it is a psychological approach to creativity which focuses upon the inner growth of the individual and not on the social aspects of ageing.

Cohen emphasises the notion that the management of human potential is a journey, in which discovering later life or life at any age is an exciting prospect. Cohen departs from the biology of ageing and focuses on factors which may cause and contribute to the ageing process, and asks: "Why do we age?" In trying to unfold the creative mystery of biology Cohen demonstrates his subscription to the will to health. By using language such as "an older person... accomplishing, contributing, enjoying, changing, growing, and creating new facets of life"⁷⁵ Cohen underlines his belief that the creative age is about finding in ourselves the capacity for creative growth and expression that can uplift our lives and inspire others in relation to our willingness to embrace the challenges and the opportunities posed by later life.⁷⁶ Cohen unfolds the universal value of the creativity in ageing as the growing social creativity in relation to the grace and the spirit of the old, combined with their presence as a growing population group that will bring more character and more integrity into our society.⁷⁷

The growing new awareness of human potential in the second half of life and the recognition of rising change in lifestyles with aging should be a wake-up call for society to seize the moment and proactively bring creativity to the community planning table. Never before in numbers, diversity, or capacity have older individuals presented society with such an opportunity to nurture and draw upon a great new national resource. More than ever before, creative planning from a full life cycle perspective is likely to pay off not only in improved quality of life for persons in second half of life,

⁷⁴ G. D. Cohen, "Research on Creativity and Aging: The Positive Impact of the Arts on Health and Illness," *The American Society on Aging* 30, no. 1 (2006); Gene D. Cohen et al., "The Impact of Professionally Conducted Cultural Programs on the Physical Health, Mental Health, and Social Functioning of Older Adults," *The Gerontologist* 46, no. 6 (2006).

⁷⁵ Cohen, "The Creative Age: Awakening Human Potential in the Second Half of Life."

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

*but in greater cohesiveness for families and communities. We need to pay attention to the enormous potential of our aging population and to better understand the unique issues and opportunities that exist in the increasingly diverse settings where they spend their everyday lives in the new landscape for aging. We have a major new national resource in our midst. And as President Franklin Delano Roosevelt keenly pointed out, "No country, however rich, can afford the waste of its human resources".*⁷⁸

Avoiding the waste of mental capacity is also at the forefront of the foresight on "Mental Capital and Wellbeing: Making the most of ourselves in the 21st century".⁷⁹ Governing the human capacities and making the most of all human resources is the very core of the Foucauldian concept of bio-power. According to Foucault⁸⁰ the administration of bodies and the calculated management of life mark a beginning of an era of bio-power and the regulated formation of the social body using methods of power capable of optimizing life in general, but without making them more difficult to govern. Organized around the management of life, new procedures of power accompanied by a long series of permanent interventions at the level of the body, conduct, health, and everyday life produced a new ordering of society oriented by the future, leaving a wide range of possibilities open to the individual and the intoxication of pursuing these possibilities through life.

The accountability discourse makes the subject appear as a consequence of a demand for accountability⁸¹ and unfolds a new ageing discourse represented by images of independence, social mobility, and agency.⁸² The future of ageing societies depends on the plasticity of the individual performance underlying people's personal responsibility for their ageing⁸³ and unfolds

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Foresight Mental Capital and Wellbeing Project, "Final Project report – Executive summary," (London: The Government Office for Science, 2008).

⁸⁰ M. Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge. The History of Sexuality: 1* (London: Penguin Books, 1976/1998).

⁸¹ F. Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*. (New York: Random House, 1969).

⁸² S. Katz and D. Laliberte-Rudman, "Exemplars of Retirement: Identity and Agency Between Lifestyle and Social Movement," in *Cultural Aging. Life Course, Lifestyle, and Senior Worlds.*, ed. Stephen Katz (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2005).

⁸³ J. Rozanova, "Discourse of successful aging in The Globe & Mail: Insights from critical gerontology," *Journal of Aging Studies* 24(2010).

the lifestyle imperative: 'Demonstrate personal responsibility by disciplining time'.⁸⁴

In order to perform age in later life you can either perform as a frail person living with the risk of ageing in protected lives or perform as an active ageing person who takes chances a part of creative ageing. A creative later life becomes the opposition to protected later lives by pointing out that creativity cannot take place within protected settings. Protected settings are not arenas of change. Instead these settings tend to preserve things as they are and eliminate the notion of a future. Protected lives are lived in settings where accountability has no option, because the mechanisms of protection are concentrated on eliminating the risks of ageing and followed by an object position risking individual's agent position.

When older adults describe themselves in terms of agency, and agency is assigned diverse meanings in relation to interpretations of ageing and old age, it is without the use of categories linked to ageing and old age. Whenever the category 'old' is used, agency becomes problematic.⁸⁵ People who are assigned to the category 'old' run the risk of losing their agent position; instead, the 'proper' way to enact agency in old age is to try and keep fit and healthy, and to keep oneself occupied and entertained.⁸⁶ The internalization of negative views on ageing reduce the expectations and lead the individuals to accept a subservient position of 'old', or to resist it by taking up the priority given to young people positioned as having a busy family and work life and acting as principal agents in the intergenerational relationships.⁸⁷

Therefore the distinction between performing age as risk or chance follows the distinction between the categories of 'old age' and 'later life'. In order to remain in later life you have to be able to demonstrate that the ageing body works. If the ageing body continues to 'work' the entrance into old age and the narrative of decline can be postponed. In short, death rather than old age must be shown to be preferred. Maintaining one's agency in later life rather than losing the agentic subject position in old age unfolds the will to health and the dominant decline narrative in the bio-medical discourses

⁸⁴ S. Wearing, "Subjects of Rejuvenation. Aging in Postfeminist Culture," in *Interrogating Postfeminism. Gender and the Politics of Popular Culture*, ed. Y. Tasker & D. Negra (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007).

⁸⁵ O.H. Jolanki, "Agency in talk about old age and health," *Journal of Aging Studies* 23, no. 4 (2009).

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

on old age. In the hegemonic structures of this dominant discourse creative ageing collapses into the notion of successful ageing.⁸⁸

The focus on productivity and health promotion produce discourses on a collective social risk of growing old in developmental societies which draws upon the master narrative from the bio-medical model of ageing grounded in the activity theory of the aged⁸⁹, developed during the 1960s and 1970s as criticism of Cumming's and Henry's disengagement theory⁹⁰ as a way of promoting positive aging as a positive relationship between activity and life satisfaction in old age.⁹¹ The interplay between the positive and the negative dialectics on ageing are constituted within the theoretical contributions to the grand narratives of ageing and are now being replayed in the policy framework on "active ageing" as "the politics of ageing in contemporary societies":

Every contemporary society uses age categorizations to partition social groups as an ongoing process into stages or phases of life. These life stages are socially constructed rather than inevitable. Aging, too, is a production of social category. At any point of life span, age simultaneously denotes a set of social constructs, defined by the norms specific to a given society at a specific point in history.⁹²

In his book *The Politics of Life Itself*⁹³ Rose describes a biological citizenship as a new kind of citizenship that is being shaped around biological citizens. In this context you have to performAGE in later life as the demonstration of healthy ageing, avoiding decline as a waste of human resources and performAGE as creative ageing. In relation to the will to health the biological citizenship subscribes to Cohen's elaboration on creative ageing as being shaped by the language and aspirations of the bio-medical discourse, in which individuals can understand and relate to themselves and to others by valuing the practices of regulation and compensation in the will to health in later life.

⁸⁸ Palmore E., "Age and sex in the social structure of the United States," *American Sociological Review* 7(1979).

⁸⁹ B.L. Neugarten and R.J. Havighurst, "Disengagement Reconsidered in a Cross-National Context," in *Adjustment to Retirement: A Cross-National Study*, ed. R.J. Havighurst and et al. (Assen, Netherlands: VanGorcum, 1969).

⁹⁰ E. Cumming and W.E. Henry, *Growing Old: The Process of Disengagement* (Basic Books, 1961).

⁹¹ S. Katz, *Disciplining Old Age: The Formation of Gerontological Knowledge* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1996).

⁹² J.L. Powell, "Rethinking Social Theory and Later Life.," (New York: NOVA Science Publishers, Inc., 2006).

⁹³ Rose, *The Politics of Life Itself*.

The will to empowerment in later life

The argument in this article is surrounded by a statement about 'creative ageing' as performAGE focusing on the performance of age as 'the will to empower' which is broader than the notion of 'the will to health'. The will to empower features the will to citizenship as a way of becoming a citizen in later life. Creative ageing unfolds in learning arenas that enable and encourage older adults to continue the process of lifelong learning so as to stay in order as a citizen – being valued as a citizen and as a human being by overcoming the images of ageing built into the decline narrative of bio-medicine. My point is that technologies of health are only one way of focusing on technologies of citizenship. A democratic citizenship then becomes different from the biological citizenship by subscribing to different understandings of what it means to become a citizen in relation to the will to health or the will to empower, which draws upon two different registers of being.

According to Rose, biological citizenship subscribes to a bio-medical approach to ageing which promotes healthy ageing.⁹⁴ By promoting creative ageing as a political approach to ageing, we distance ourselves from the dominant bio-medical model of active ageing and instead move towards an active ageing approach that subscribes to the will to empower in later life. Empowerment strategies reveal creative ageing as a way of debunking the bio-medical dominance. Similarly the decline narrative is exchanged in favour of a narrative on resources, growth, experiences and strength. Degeneration is challenged by a vitalistic approach to later life as the vitality of ageing is something other than cognitive plasticity. The vitalistic approach involves the whole body as a social body that is being shaped by vitalistic discourses from the past.

Whilst Cohen talks about growth and resources he implies that responsible citizens, in the biological context are responsible for the self both in the corporeal and genetic sense. According to Rose;

[o]ne has long been responsible for the health and illness of the body, but now "somatic individuals" must also know and manage the implications of one's own genome. This responsibility for the self to manage its present in the light of a knowledge of its own future can be termed "genetic prudence": a prudential norm that introduces new distinctions between good and bad subjects of ethical choice and biological susceptibility.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

By interpreting this notion of responsibility in relation to creative ageing, creativity becomes the only way to deal with the genetic inheritance – it transforms the destiny into a matter of choice. Creative ageing within biological citizenship is about being able to push forward opportunities (the idea of normal ageing) instead of relying upon one's destiny to reveal itself (the idea of natural ageing).

Individual subjects are transformed into citizens by what I call technologies of citizenship: discourses, programs, and other tactics aimed at making individuals politically active and capable of self-government. Examples might include a neighbourhood organizing campaign, an empowerment program, safe-sex education, a shelter for battered women, social service programs promoting self-help, self-sufficiency, or self-esteem, or a radically democratic social movement. I see these technologies of citizenship, however well intentioned, as modes of constituting and regulating citizens: that is, strategies for governing the very subjects whose problems they seek to redress – the powerless, the apathetic, or those at risk. Although I am deeply sympathetic to the project of radical or participatory democracy, I am sceptical that such a project presents an answer to questions of power, inequality, and political participation. Like any mode of government, democracy both enables and constrains the possibilities for political action. Democratic modes of government are not necessarily more or less dangerous, free, or idealistic than any other. Even democratic self-government is still a mode of exercising power – in this case, over oneself. Like government more generally, self-government can swing between the poles of tyranny and absolute liberty. One can govern one's own or others' lives well or badly.⁹⁶

The normative approach to governing one's own life becomes the core of self-government, both in biological and political terms. The politics of life itself might in the will to empower be transformed into the life of politics itself and reflect the notion of activity as the central aspect of how to govern one's life being able to create new kinds of activities that go beyond the will to health subscribing to the will to empower creating democratic citizens in a broader sense than biological citizens. You might say that we are all bio-

⁹⁶ B. Cruikshank, *The Will to Empower. Democratic Citizens and Other Subjects* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1999).

logical citizens, but the notion of 'citizenship' underlines the complex and diverse social meanings of this singular term.

When older adults were questioned about their plans and ideas for retirement, their responses frequently referred to activity and activities as key elements in their lives.⁹⁷ Activities are, according to Katz, mostly linked to minimizing the risks of becoming dependent through ageing.⁹⁸ "Independent living" has been used by the disabled people's movement in order to challenge politically and ideologically the conventional thinking surrounding disability:

Part of the reason for this apparent and unprecedented success is almost universal appeal of the concept of "independent living" within the context of western culture. It is apolitical in the sense that it appeals directly to advocates of the politics of the right and the left, and it is political in that the environment and cultural changes needed to facilitate meaningful "independent living" for disabled people will benefit everyone regardless of impairment or status.⁹⁹

The concept of "inclusive living" has evolved from the concept of "independent living", to avoid misinterpretations by some disability activists in the UK, where the social model of disability is very influential. Barnes¹⁰⁰ points out that the philosophy of inclusiveness is much more appealing than the understanding of independent living, because Britain's disabled people's movement is based on an understanding of life in favour of all human beings being socially interdependent, causing a truly independent lifestyle to be inconceivable. The sentence: "We are all disabled!"¹⁰¹ suspends sovereignty as an understanding of the social and installs the subject as interdependent. If we are not sovereign then the conversation about independent living makes no sense. Barnes holds on to the understanding of disabled people being oppressed within capitalist society and continues to talk about an increasingly costly and complex barrier to the development of a truly meaningful inclusive representative democracy: he points out that the philosophy of independent living is based upon the assumption that all human life is of

⁹⁷ S. Katz, "Busy Bodies. Activity, Aging, and the Management of Everyday Life," *Journal of Ageing Studies Activities and Active Ageing* 14, no. 2 (2000).

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ C. Barnes, "Independent Living, Politics and Implications".

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ L-H. Schmidt, "Hvordan oplyse? (How to Enlighten?)," *Social Kritik*, no. 36 (1995).

equal worth, that everyone has freedom of choice, control over their life and the right to participate fully in all areas of life.¹⁰²

‘Interdependent’ or ‘independent’: that is the question. The performance of creative ageing assumes the understanding of the subject as sovereign and suspends the interdependent societal approach. It is for this reason that it is possible to understand the process of becoming as a process of longing – that is the longing to become a sovereign subject. This understanding of the subject is related to the Cartesian and Hegelian tradition that places the transcendental individual in the prominent role.

Interdependent living is related to the understanding of ‘dependent living’, because the process of becoming a subject is related to the understanding of the social self mentioned above. The two understandings of the social and the subject are related to a modern and a post-modern way of thinking and producing knowledge. I write this article in a post-modern era, and my understanding of the social and of the subject is based on an interdependent approach.

Activity and active ageing refers to a solid discourse that is rooted in the understanding of the Enlightenment and the core notions of human perfectibility and labour as definitional of humanity embodied within this period – notions which are incompatible with the interests of impaired people or older people. The limits of the Enlightenment radicalism, as seen in the work of Marx, are defined by the logic and values of production. The meaning of humanity becomes co-terminus with such values, and the category of “disabled” is situated negatively in relation to them. This approach forms an explanatory framework for understanding the form and nature of disablement as a historical product.¹⁰³

Following Foucault, we might also ask how, why, and in what forms active adjustment to old age has been constituted as an ethical domain, and why this ethical form became so persistent despite its varying forms and intensity? Addressing this question leads us to track the persistency of activity and adjustment in relation to the social problems to which they appeared as fitting conceptual, ethical, and practical solutions, in the professional discourses that framed them as such.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Barnes, “Independent Living, Politics and Implications..”

¹⁰³ P. Abberley, “The Limits of Classical Social Theory in the Analysis and Transformation of Disablement,” in *Disability Studies: Past Present and Future*, ed. L. Barton and M. Oliver (Leeds: The Disability Press, 1997).

¹⁰⁴ Katz, “Busy Bodies. Activity, Aging, and the Management of Everyday Life.”

Equally significant and overlooked are the conceptual activities of elderly persons who construct their own analytical models of later life based not on gerontological theories or activity schedules, but on the lived experiences routinized in their everyday environments (Gubrium and Wallace 1990). In particular, as Gubrium (1992), and Gubrium and Holstein (1993, 1997, 1998) have shown in a number of insightful studies, people theorize their lives by translating professional vocabularies into personal narratives. We all extract pieces and elements from standard psychological, medical, and sociological vocabularies and fit them into our daily discourse to explain ourselves to others and to address problems that seem to demand some kind of familiarity with professional knowledges. People discussing grief or chronic illness, for example, inevitably talk about “stages” of coping. Although such stages are originally a product of academic scholarship, they become embellished, emplotted, and molded to everyday contexts through social interaction and narrative discourse. Thus, people fracture and recombine the conceptual, practical, and ethical aspects of professional vocabularies in ways that shed new light on both the vocabulary and its embeddedness in everyday life. With these points in mind, in the next section I consider the relation between vocabularies of activity and narratives of active living.¹⁰⁵

Moreover, if the problematization of adjustment and the theories, ideals, practices of, and resistances to activity management where powerful elements in situating older people in the postwar social order, then how might stories of becoming active senior subjects in this order illustrate the incongruities of activity as the hallmark of responsible living?¹⁰⁶

When older adults are craving creativity in later life, it unfolds a way of becoming a citizen through activities where individual subjects are transformed into democratic or political citizens. That activities performed in the cultural heritage sector support the transformation of the individual subject into a citizen can be ascribed to the fact that learning activities feature heritage learning as lifelong learning through heritage subscribing to political citizenship.

The slogan: “Express yourself in later life through heritage as an arena to performAGE in later life becoming a political citizen in later life” is quite

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

interesting in relation to the understanding of heritage learning a creative process of becoming an entrepreneurial ageing self. Cultural heritage institutions offer space that can be understood as heritage learning places where older adults can learn through heritage by creative processes that shape the entrepreneurial self.

The final statement elaborated in this article unfolds the argument that the political aspect of empowerment from the 1960s and the 1970s is being redefined in contemporary ageing societies as the creative aspect of empowerment through heritage and participatory arts. By attending the heritage learning arenas older adults are offered troublesome subject positions, which they can take up in order to become an entrepreneurial self in later life. Such an approach could become the future political agenda in relation to policy making in ageing societies because it corresponds with the societal emphasis upon forming responsible citizens by demonstrating a will to empowerment.

Performing age in cultural heritage settings makes room to debunk the decline narrative of ageing according to the bio-medical model. This kind of performativity has the ability to transgress the stereotypes of ageing that circulates in medical discourses and contemporary popular cultures according to discourses of age as decline and redundancy. Heritage learning environments become subversive places that create transformative, oppositional ways of representing ageing, which allows the agentic self to flourish as a politic citizenship as well as an entrepreneurial self.

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CREATIVITY IN LATER LIFE: POSSIBILITIES FOR PERSONAL EMPOWERMENT

Abstract

This article examines the relationship between creative pursuits in later life and personal empowerment. Unfortunately, the relationship between creativity and ageing remains to this very day highly vague and ill-defined. Society tends to have a negative view of ageing, believing that old age brings a decline in adults' intelligence, and hence, less ability to provide an original solution to a problem or challenge at hand. As a result, research on creativity has generally focused on relatively younger cohorts rather than adults who are in the latter stages of the life course. Moreover, the centre of attention has been largely on the relationship of creativity to intelligence, rather upon the possible linkages between creativity and empowerment. To achieve its goal, this article reports upon reminiscence sessions conducted with older adults in Malta in July 2012. Although reminiscence is not typically considered a creative activity, it actually entails cognitive and emotional processes involved in the conception of meaningful solutions to past problems. Research findings demonstrate clearly that creative engagement in later life leads to improved levels of personal empowerment. First, by bringing about changes that enhance more positive attitudes toward life, better problem-solving skills, and greater emotional control (intrapersonal empowerment). And secondly, by stimulating changes in attitudes and skills related to interacting with other people, such as appreciation of other people's merits, willingness to seek help from others, and eagerness to care for others (interpersonal empowerment).

Introduction

My lecturing duties in social gerontology take me frequently to caring settings for older persons. One day, entering a residential home for older persons, I was struck by the variety of art paintings on its walls. Thinking that somebody was holding an exhibition for the home's benefits, I was informed that the paintings were the work of some residents who had run painting ses-

sions twice a week during the summer. The next day, my schedule took me to a community day centre for older persons. As a kind of déjà vu, my entrance saw me facing various paintings, arts and crafts, sewing artefacts, and poems displayed on walls and tables. Not wanting to do the same mistake twice, I immediately congratulated the members present for their creative work. The physical, psychological, and social benefits of creativity were unmistakable. The older persons in both the nursing home and day centre were optimistic, extroverted, and this can never be overstated, highly inspiring.

Henceforth, began my fascination of that interface between creativity, later life, and learning. At every opportunity, during lectures, visits to nursing homes and day centres, and in my roles in elder learning programmes, I continuously strive to understand better the capacity of older adults for creative pursuits and the potential benefits that follow. Unfortunately, the relationship between creativity and ageing remains to this very day highly vague and ill-defined. Society tends to have a negative view of ageing, believing that old age brings a decline in adults' intelligence, and hence, less ability to provide an original solution to a problem or challenge at hand. As a result, research on creativity has generally focused on relatively younger cohorts rather than adults who are in the latter stages of the life course. Moreover, the centre of attention has been largely on the relationship of creativity to intelligence, rather upon the possible linkages between creativity and empowerment.

This article studies the potential of creativity to lead older adults towards improved levels of personal empowerment, and reports upon reminiscence sessions conducted with older adults in Malta in July 2012. Although reminiscence is not typically considered a creative activity, it actually entails cognitive and emotional processes involved in the conception of meaningful solutions to past problems. This article includes eight parts. Whilst the first section explores the relations between creativity and later life, the second section focuses on the benefits of creative pursuits for older persons. The third section outlines the concept of personal empowerment, whilst the methodological implications that guided the action research project are the task of the fourth section. The fifth section provides information on the way that the reminiscence sessions developed. The final three sections present data on the potential of creativity to augment personal empowerment in later life.

Creativity and later life

One dominant stereotype arises when creativity and later life are put next to each other. It is widely assumed, and to an extent even accepted, that creativity is an attribute commonly associated with the young, often perceived as the exclusive product of the high energy, mental acuity, and dexte-

urity of youth. Commentators are quick to point out that Keats and Mozart, reached the heights in their youth, and hence, serve as the archetypes of youthful vigour and artistic drive. On the other hand, Verdi, Picasso, and Monet, who all peaked much later in age, are regarded as exceptions to the rule. In an oft-cited passage, creativity is generally defined by both older adult educators and social gerontologists as

*...the ability to innovate, to change the environment rather than merely adjust to it in a more passive sense. So, we create scientific theories, compose artistic masterpieces, and construct imaginative utopias.*¹⁰⁷

It is therefore a process requiring the individual to open to new ideas and approaches, to seek an original solution for a problem or challenge at hand.¹⁰⁸ Creativity also incorporates a range of cognitive and emotional processes involved in the conception of meaningful products, a meta-cognitive process that generates novel and useful associations, attributes, images, or sets of operations, to solve problems, produce plans, or fabricate novel products. Ultimately, the creative process challenges us to use accumulated skills to manipulate tools and resources to express a vision or idea.

The limited literature that exists on that interface between creativity and later life demonstrate that whilst creative outputs, and such processes as divergent thinking, actually show a decline from middle age onwards. Yet, there is clear evidence that capacity, interest, and attitudes do not necessarily decline with age. Although Lehman's¹⁰⁹ book *Age and Achievement*, and Dennis's¹¹⁰ paper *Creative productivity between ages of 20 and 80 years*, found evidence of a decline of creativity with age, their work has received strong criticism.¹¹¹ Critics pointed out that these works measured creative output and not creative capacity. This distinction is important because as people grow older they tend to experience a variety of factors – ranging from in-

¹⁰⁷ D.K. Simonton, "Creativity and wisdom in aging," in *Columbia retirement handbook*, ed. A. Monk (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

¹⁰⁸ M. Flood and K. D. Phillips, "Creativity in older adults: A plethora of possibilities," *Issues in Mental Health Nursing* 28, no. 4 (2007).

¹⁰⁹ H. C. Lehman, *Age and achievement* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953).

¹¹⁰ W. Dennis, "Creative productivity between ages of 20 and 80 years," *Journal of Gerontology* 21, no. 1 (1966).

¹¹¹ J. Hickson and W. Housley, "Creativity in later life," *Educational Gerontology* 23, no. 6 (1997).

creased administrative tasks, illness, loss of sensory acuity, to other changing biopsychosocial factors – that decrease one's creative output while not implying decreased capacity. In fact, life-span studies on creativity do not show a bell curve peaking in the middle years but three diverse patterns – namely, up-down-up, rising creative activity, and consistent creative activity. The reasons for these patterns are not clear. It is possible that an individual's locus of control affects the patterns of creativity over the life span. On one hand, the up-down-up pattern (a creative peak in the early years followed by a decline and then another peak in the later years) may reflect an artist with an external locus of control. The decline in the middle years is generally experienced by those facing family and career responsibilities, and hence, whose life is more controlled by external forces. As Lamdin and Fugate¹¹² underline, "the inner drive towards creativity, frequently truncated or denied by the demands of 'getting on' in life – earning a living, raising a family, attending to the multiple chores of existence – can have a joyous resurgence in later life". On the other hand, consistent and rising patterns of creativity may be more typical of persons whose life contexts make them more personally responsible for their daily living. These include persons who have no partners or children, and who engage in creative pursuits as their full-time occupation.

Benefits of creativity for older persons

Research studies about the benefits of creativity work for older adults suggest that there are multiple positive effects. Findings imply that creative activities can improve problem-solving ability, self-esteem, coping skills, anxiety, life satisfaction, and depressive symptoms. Moreover, creative interventions have generally elicited positive anecdotal feedback from older adult participants and stimulated their involvement and responsiveness.¹¹³ In an examination of the relationship between creativity and successful ageing, Fisher and Specht¹¹⁴ concluded that creative activity contributes to successful aging by encouraging development of problem-solving skills that translate into a practical creativity in older adults' daily living. They also found that creativity fostered a sense of competence, purpose, and emotional growth. Physiological benefits have also been recorded. When the brain engages in creative work, it alerts the parasympathetic nervous system; heart rate and breathing slow down, blood pressure decreases, blood circulation to the intestines in-

¹¹² L. Lamdin and M. Fugate, "Elder learning: New frontier in an aging society," (Phoenix, AZ: American Council on Education & the Oryx Press, 1997), 63.

¹¹³ Flood and Phillips, "Creativity in older adults: A plethora of possibilities."

¹¹⁴ B. Fisher and D. Specht, "Successful aging and creativity later in life," *Journal of Aging Studies* 13, no. 4 (1999).

creases, and the body shifts into relaxation.¹¹⁵ Creative activities also stimulate the hypothalamus to activate the autonomic nervous system, stabilizing and maintaining blood flow, heart rate, and hormone levels.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, engaging in creative activity can stimulate the release of endorphins from specific areas of the brain, affecting brain cells and the immune system and improving their function. In fact, Kreitzer and Snyder¹¹⁷ found that the placement of art sessions in intensive care functioned to help patients relax, use less pain medication, and to be discharged earlier than peers who did not have artwork in their rooms.

If one turns the attention towards specific creative pursuits, poetry was found to offer many benefits such as provoking insight, promoting life reviews, and encouraging the resolution of unresolved conflicts.¹¹⁸ Other forms of writing – especially keeping journals – have also proven useful for older adults. Brady and Sky¹¹⁹ categorised the benefits of journal writing as the ability to cope, the joy of discovery, the nurturing of voice and spirit, in addition to poetry-writing, as well as building up confidence, since participants tend to grow more confident as they realised that they did have important things to say. Reminiscence is another frequently studied form of creative activity. Westerhof and colleagues¹²⁰ conducted a study of reminiscence in 57 older adults, who participated in 12 themed reminiscence sessions, and found that participants tended to have more positive personal meanings after the sessions, and be less negative about the self and social relationships. As regards art, Cohen¹²¹ compared 150 treatment and 150 control participants aged 65 and older, where the former met for 35 weekly meetings and were also given between-session assignments, as well as outings to exhibitions, and concerts. Findings showed that whilst the treatment group reported better health one year after baseline starting point measures, the control group reported their health was not as good one year post-baseline measures.

¹¹⁵ M. Samuels and M. Lane, *Creative healing* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1998).

¹¹⁶ M. Lane, "Creativity and spirituality in nursing," *Holistic Nursing Practice* 19, no. 3 (2005).

¹¹⁷ M. Kreitzer and M. Snyder, "Healing the heart: Integrating complimentary therapies and healing practices into the care of cardiovascular patients," *Progressive Cardiovascular Nursing* 17, no. 1 (2002).

¹¹⁸ H. Sluder, "The write way: Using poetry for self-disclosure," *Journal of Psychosocial Nursing* 28, no. 7 (1990).

¹¹⁹ E. Brady and H. Sky, "Journal writing among older learners," *Educational Gerontology* 29, no. 2 (2003).

¹²⁰ G. Westerhof, E. Bohlmeijer, and M. Valenkamp, "In search of meaning: A reminiscence program for older persons," *Educational Gerontology* 30, no. 9 (2004).

¹²¹ G. Cohen, *The mature mind: The positive power of the ageing brain* (New York: Basic, 2005).

Mental health was also positively affected by the intervention as the intervention group revealed significantly lower levels of depression. After a year, whilst activity levels amongst the intervention group increased by an average of two activities per person, the opposite was the case for the control group.

Personal empowerment

There can be no doubt as regards the potential of creative pursuits to lead older adults towards improved levels of active, successful, and productive ageing. However, it is unfortunate that there is a tendency for many authors to refer to the actual benefits derived from participation in creative pursuits as end-in-themselves. My view is that such physiological and psychosocial benefits are to be celebrated primarily for the reason that they function in empowering older adults. Empowerment is not the same as benefits, as the former is only the outcome of the latter. Empowerment generally refers to the acquisition of knowledge and skills for coping with problems and stress, the ability to gain greater control over one's life, the ability to comprehend social and political realities, or the cultivation of resources and strategies that help to achieve goals.¹²² Empowerment can occur at two levels – namely, at the individual level (personal empowerment) and the social level (collective empowerment). Personal empowerment, to quote Cheung and colleagues¹²³ refers "to the occurrence of changes of the individual in personal qualities, which include outlook on life, personal ability, emotional control, and knowledge about society, all of which are conducive to more effective decision making and handling of problems". To-date, research in older adult learning has highlighted the difficulties that educators face in their attempts to translate learning initiatives into larger community change.¹²⁴ Yet, the opposite is true with respect to personal empowerment, as there are various narratives on elder learning highlighting how study circles lead to improvements in the personal qualities of the learners.¹²⁵

¹²² Y.W. Cheung, B-H. Mok, and T-S. Cheung, "Personal empowerment and life satisfaction among self-help group members in Hong Kong," *Small Group Research* 36, no. 3 (2005).

¹²³ *Ibid.*: 356.

¹²⁴ A. Withnall, *Improving learning in later life* (London: Routledge, 2010).

¹²⁵ E.F. Nye, "A Freirean approach to working with elders or: *Conscientização* at the Jewish community centre," *Journal of aging studies* 12, no. 2 (1998); Marvin Formosa, "Rethinking empowerment: A postmodern appraisal of critical educational gerontology," in *Elderly, education, intergenerational relationships and social development. Proceedings of the 2nd Conference of Education and Learning of Older Adults (ELOA)*, ed. E. Veloso, et al. (Braga, Portugal: CIED – Centro de Investigação em Educação Instituto de Educação, Universidade do Minho, 2011).

There are strong overlaps between creativity and empowerment. Adaptability, flexibility, and coping are all inherent processes in the creative activity. This is because it is through creativity that individuals seek an original solution to a problem or challenge at hand and, therefore, become open to new ideas and approaches. Of course, there is a risk that what one tries will not work and, hence, this tests the persons' confidence, competence, and ability to learn from failure. However, as Fisher and Specht¹²⁶ underline, it is this willingness to take risks, to cope with the unexpected, to welcome challenge and even failure as a part of the process to arrive at a new and deeper understanding of one's activity, which is at the nexus between creativity and successful aging. Hence, through creativity older persons bolster their sense of self as competent and efficacious – or in more academic terms – the 'agentic self'. The close links between creativity and empowerment are also due to the fact that creative persons are open to different paths to the same goal. This openness is a coping mechanism in the sense that when one is blocked from a goal, despite the frustration this may cause, it is also a creative challenge to work with the tools available to find another way to achieve the same goal.¹²⁷ In other words, creative individuals have more experience in confronting limitations or barriers, whilst pushing themselves to surmount these limits to find a different path to the same goal.

Methodology

In my attempt to study creativity in later life, I coordinated a reminiscence programme for older persons titled *Saying it as it is: Unfolding the past*. Reminiscence is the act or process of recollecting past experiences or events, and entails cognitive-emotional processes of providing meaningful solutions to past problems. To cite Flood and Phillips,

*During the process of reminiscing, older adults also may come up with different ways of remembering their past by reframing life events. As a result of reminiscence, past conflicts can be transformed into more stable and creative products. Reminiscing may serve as a stimulus for new ways of thinking and doing things, as older adults rethink past events where they (or others) used different strategies to cope with situations.*¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Fisher and Specht, "Successful aging and creativity later in life."

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Flood and Phillips, "Creativity in older adults: A plethora of possibilities."

Reminiscing sessions took place every week, during five 3-hour sessions during the month of July (2012), at my personal residence in Malta. Malta is a micro-state in the Mediterranean Sea with Sicily 93 km to the north and Africa 288 km to the south. In 2010, the total population of Malta was 365,568.¹²⁹ The goal of the sessions was to investigate the potential of reminiscence to improve older persons' levels of personal empowerment. The sessions consisted of structured reminiscence on three key topics – namely, school days, leisure, community life, and major historical events. Participants were recruited through a publicity email. Sessions were free and open to everybody with the only proviso that one had surpassed his/her 65th birthday. My target population was eight learners but as many as 19 persons replied to my advert, demonstrating not only the lack of structured activities for older persons in Malta, but also the strong appeal that creativity sessions have for retirees. Faced with such a predicament, participants were enrolled on a first-come first-served basis. All subjects were literate, functionally mobile, and ranging in age from 61 to 79 years. There were 5 women and 3 men. Further information is in table 1.

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Marital status	Past occupation	Husband/wife's past occupation
John	61	male	married	clerk	Housewife
Peter	67	male	married	library assistant	Housewife
Natalie	68	female	married	housewife	car mechanic
Rosette	69	female	married	housewife	farmer
Claudette	70	female	widow	housewife	taxi driver
Charles	70	Male	married	engineer	teacher
Matthew	78	male	married	shop assistant	shop assistant
Gloria	79	female	single	Teacher	--

Table 1: Participants in reminiscence programme: *Saying it as it is: Unfolding the past* (July 2012).

The data presented herein was collected through participant observation, recorded conversational probes throughout the learning sessions, and a feedback/evaluation form which was distributed at the end of the session.

¹²⁹ National Office of Statistics, *Demographic review 2010* (Malta: National Office of Statistics, 2011).

The road travelled

Following the advice of Housden¹³⁰, preparations included the presentation of props – such as old educational textbooks, small chalkboards, popular songs of the 1960/1970s, photographs of dances and weddings in the 1960/1970s, old photographs of Malta, reproductions of old newspaper headlines, and old magazine advertisements. As expected, the initial session took off with difficulty since the participants did not know each other. However, after an ice-breaking session, a certain degree of trust was established, and participants were more forthcoming with their personal life stories thereafter. Reminiscence activity was also encouraged through open-ended questions, inviting descriptions, comments, opinions on my behalf, such as “can you describe your childhood?”, “how did you feel about that?”, “what sort of person was she?”, “can you describe the house you lived in?” and “why did you decide to change jobs?” The props were extremely helpful in eliciting a response from the participants. For instance, the old textbooks prompted various reminiscences about their school experience:

If I close my eyes I can see myself in my stuffy classroom, where I spent some three years of my life. My best mate was [name], her sister was also in our class, despite being two years older than us, her mum wanted them to keep an eye on each other. That shows how much our parents valued girls' education in our times! Our teachers were not much better though. They believed that they were wasting their time with girls who would drop off school as soon they were 14 which was the legal school limit at that time. (Natalie)

Others talked at length on past leisure pursuits and about community life during the 1960s and 1970s. As to be expected, comparisons with present times were not missing:

During the 1960s, most of the entertainment was in the form of Saturday dances in local town halls. They started at six and finished at nine, many females had to be at home by nine, and in the winter, even by eight o'clock. It was nothing like today. During the 1960s, most of the entertainment was in the form of Saturday dances in local town halls. (Charles)

Interestingly, participants' reminiscence about major historical events brought on healthy debates as to the value of such milestones to the Maltese nation:

¹³⁰ S. Housden, *Reminiscence and lifelong learning* (Leicester: NIACE, 2007).

I do not agree with Charles that Malta's independence was entirely positive. Many worked with the British government and lost their job as Malta achieved independence. Many left for Australia and Canada in search of work and never returned to Malta. I was in favour of Malta's independence but the transition was too abrupt. We were not prepared to be in charge of our own economy overnight. (John)

Whilst the reminiscent data is surely interesting in its own right, what is more directly remarkable with respect to this study's aim and objectives, is that as the result of such activity participants encountered the following experiences:

identity preservation – discovering and understanding better who they are, problem-solving – drawing on experiences from the past for coping in the present, bonding – rediscovering common attachments between same-aged peers, intimacy maintenance – remembering personally significant persons no longer present, and teaching/informing – enlightening others about values and history.

Such experiences functioned to imbue participants with improved levels of personal empowerment. First, by bringing about changes that enhance more positive attitudes toward life, better problem-solving skills, and greater emotional control (*intrapersonal empowerment*). And secondly, by stimulating changes in attitudes and skills related to interacting with other people, such as appreciation of other people's merits, willingness to seek help from others, and eagerness to care for others (*interpersonal empowerment*).

Intrapersonal empowerment

The creative processes that made reminiscence possible were central in attributing participants with improved levels of intrapersonal empowerment which relates to self-perceptions concerning “domain-specific perceived control and self-efficacy, motivation to control, perceived competence, and mastery”.¹³¹ This intrapersonal component of empowerment includes perceptions precisely because they are a basic element that provides people with the initiative to engage in behaviours to influence. In fact, most participants recounted how they, as a result of their experience in the group, experienced

¹³¹ M. A. Zimmerman, “Psychological empowerment: Issues and illustrations,” *American Journal of Community Psychology* 23, no. 5 (1995): 588.

changes in their outlook on life. Many stressed how the reminiscence sessions functioned to make them more positive, hopeful, open, and gregarious:

Seeing my past from a more present standpoint made me aware of my achievements despite of the many obstacles I faced. I now realise how strong I was not to let my car accident stop me from raising a happy family and continue working as long as possible. Previously I was depressed that I had to stop working before retirement age but now I am proud of my efforts to continue working until my late 50s. (Matthew)

For many years, I struggled to come to terms with my arthritis. I always focused on what my illness prevented me from doing. I never focused on what I could still do. It is true that my illness prevents me from doing things that many persons in my age-bracket engage in. But looking back at the past ten years or so, I now realise that I still engaged in a lot of activities. The future is not that bad, after all. (Gloria)

Many also highlighted how listening to members' different experiences of same events made them better placed to make crucial decisions about present dilemmas they are facing:

My life is tough at the moment. I still miss my husband. I am still angry that he passed away. But these sessions helped me to remember and share the good times we had together. These sessions helped me to realise that I must get my life in order. I must not leave everything in the hands of my children. Widowhood is not the end. I must be strong to face life again. I am not there yet! But I promise to work hard. (Claudette)

Becoming old is confusing. You think that you are young, strong, and independent when you are not! My mistake is that I approach life with an unrealistic sense of affairs. I do not ask for help when I need it. I ask help for things which I can do in my own. These sessions helped me to take on a more realistic take on my life situation. I feel better now, more in control of my life. (Peter)

Most importantly, perhaps, was the fact that all participants spoke of how this creative experience helped them to transform their personal aptitudes for the better. Whilst some participants highlighted how they had learned

to maximise own strengths and accept own weaknesses, others pointed out how learning about the past enabled them to become more confident in solving present problems and control negative emotional feelings.

I do not like to admit this in public but becoming old depressed me. Ageing, for me, is negative state of affairs. I am always brooding on the limitations that ageing brings on older persons. These sessions made me aware that ageing also brings positive issues in our lives such as fewer responsibilities, more free time, and an opportunity to do things for which you never had time for. (Natalie)

These sessions helped me in looking at my life from different ways. I am aware that my disappointments in life are strongly overshadowed by my achievements. If I have to list my achievements, these would be raising a happy family, working two jobs for more than two decades, and also helping my daughter to raise our two grandsons. I now realise that success in life is not measured by one's bank account. (Rosette)

The above excerpts indicate clearly that reminiscence also arises as a source of life satisfaction for older persons. The process of recollecting memories from the past helps to integrate past experiences (who I was then) with the present (who am I now) and make reasonable projections about the future (who will I be, what will happen to me). As the consequence, of the reminiscence sessions, participants engaged in the re-examining and re-integration of unresolved conflicts vis-à-vis the contemporary social scenario. Indeed, creative pursuits have an unlimited potential for participants to gain a sense of satisfaction, a sense of tranquillity, and a capacity to enjoy to the full their later years.

Interpersonal empowerment

Research findings also acknowledged a second effect on participants following their engagement in reminiscence pursuits – namely, interpersonal empowerment, which refers to changes in attitudes and skills in interacting with other people, such as appreciation of other people's merits, willingness to seek help from others, and eagerness to care for others. Participants highlighted how following end of the reminiscence sessions they started to understand better their community, as well as the norms and values of particular communities which made them conscious of the importance of cooperative decision-making, commitment to collective interests, and mutual

assistance. The following statements on how the sessions helped them to appreciate others' merits lend evidence of the participants' improved levels of interpersonal empowerment:

In life there is a tendency for people to look at history in black and white. I am no exception, and I must admit that until this experience I have always looked at bird hunters and trappers with very disapproving eyes. Now that I have made friends with Peter, and listened to his arguments, I must admit that I understand better their difficulties and aspirations. (John)

There is no history but only histories. If one political decision is beneficial to some it does not mean that it may not hurt some other people. I have always been a proud Socialist in life but, of course, I will be the first to admit that Malta's Socialist period was not always a bed of roses. There is no doubt that some people, such as Gloria, suffered from our heavy handedness. (Matthew)

Participants also emphasised how the reminiscence sessions aided them in getting along well with others living in the same community:

We have met only a few times, but it has been enough to make me aware that during our lives we spend too much time fighting and bickering amongst each other rather than building a better future. Wars are the curse of humanity. If I stop and think about all the wars in my life time, the number of people killed, shattered lives, and amount of money spent, I despair. (Charles)

Hence, creativity also has the potential to aid participants achieve the developmental tasks of generativity and integrity¹³², and hence, achieve what Tornstam's¹³³ terms of reference "gerotranscendence" – namely, "a shift in meta-perspective, from a material and rational vision to a more cosmic and transcendent one, normally followed by an increase in life satisfaction". Activities involving reminiscence have the potential to trigger the process of integrating one's life experience into a more cohesive whole, and thereby, al-

¹³² E. Erikson, *The life cycle completed: A Review* (New York: Norton, 1982); ———, *Childhood and society* (New York: Norton, 1986).

¹³³ L. Tornstam, "Gerotranscendence: A reformulation of the disengagement theory," *Aging: Clinical and Experimental Research* 1, no. 1 (1989): 60.

lowing older people to grapple with their vulnerability and mortality as they reassess the meanings of their lives.

Conclusion

The results of this study challenge the inevitable decline of creativity with age as all participants were successful in engaging imaginatively in reminiscence. Data analysis suggests that creativity can help individuals grow through the ageing process as participants succeeded in gaining the experiences of identity preservation, problem-solving, bonding, intimacy maintenance, and teaching/informing. Such experiences also functioned to imbue participants with improved levels of personal empowerment. First, by bringing about changes that enhance more positive attitudes toward life, better problem-solving skills, and greater emotional control (*intrapersonal empowerment*). And secondly, by stimulating changes in attitudes and skills related to interacting with other people, such as appreciation of other people's merits, willingness to seek help from others, and eagerness to care for others (*interpersonal empowerment*). At the same time, it also resulted that creative pursuits in later life instilled participants with improved levels in life satisfaction and in achieving the developmental tasks of gerotranscendence.

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THE HOUSE OF MEMORY

Abstract

Den Gamle By, the National Open Air Museum of Urban History and Culture in Denmark, has since 2005 worked on projects for elderly people suffering from senile dementia. During this Den Gamle By brings these people into contact with their forgotten past. Thereby the elderly people regain their self-respect and can again – though only for a short while – find themselves in a recognizable context.

The Memory Retrieval programmes in Den Gamle By are innovative and barrier-breaking in relation to the normal tasks of culture-historical museums. With this work Den Gamle By extends the concept of museums and shows new ways of what can be presented in a museum.

By New Year 2012 Den Gamle By opened a new house, The House of Memory, where the focus is the period of the 1950s in Denmark. The house is established with facilities that meet the needs of elderly people.

Den Gamle By – which means The Old Town – is an Open Air Museum, founded in 1909, based upon illustrative urban history and culture with particular reference to the history and development of the 19th century. The museum has 75 historic houses from towns and cities across Denmark.

Since 2000 The Living Museum has been one of the most popular parts of the museum. A range of historic houses have been prepared in order to accommodate this form of presentation. A great selection of costumes have been reproduced, and the staff have been trained in educational programmes in order to learn this specific way of interpreting the 19th century history for museum visitors.

In 2006 Den Gamle By began building a new town district intended to imitate the history of the 20th century, but already in 2004 I had the idea of using the Living Museum as a way of engaging with elderly people suffering from senile dementia. Why would I do that? Well, it is Den Gamle By's mission to bring history to everyone – even to those who are not used to visiting museums.

The aim of this memory retrieval project is to give fragile elderly people the opportunity to maintain or regain control over their own life, to hold

on to their identity and self-worth, and to master their lives for an extended period. The two main elements of the project are:

To use the museum setting in order to give substance to the experiences of elderly people suffering from senile dementia, and

To contribute to the education of those who take care of elderly people suffering from senile dementia, staff members as well as civilians.

The idea

The idea started as an experiment in 2004, with the hope to be able to create a setting for the marginalized group of elderly people who suffer from Alzheimer's or senile dementia. The furniture and objects of the museum setting were intended to help the group to recall and share their memories, and to take part in a social event. Since 2005 a small group of people in Den Gamle By Open Air Museum have worked with and developed memory retrieval programmes for elderly people with senile dementia. A key person from the municipal social and healthcare administration is a part of this group, and the participating members of staff from the museum have been through a basic course about senile dementia.

The first programme

Small groups of people with senile dementia are invited into a home with a historic interior. The hosts, who meet these groups, are members of the Living History staff who act as the habitants of the house. The visiting groups are welcomed as guests, and they are invited to help in the kitchen at the iron cast stove and use other objects typically from the period, or to sit in the living room with a lot of things they can see and touch, things they remember from their childhood and youth. Later they all have coffee with freshly made pancakes in the kitchen, very often with help from some of the experienced guests.

The atmosphere is warm and homely, memories are exchanged and spirits are high. In this context the guests who suffer more or less from severe senile dementia recollect memories, they are able to communicate with the others, they join in the singing of traditional Danish songs, and they participate actively in the social event. The whole visit is an experience which has a huge impact on the guests' senses and emotions.. The guests' memories are retrieved. Consequently beyond the consciousness and the intellect there is a way for memories to be retrieved and, with careful attention and conversation with the staff, the guests can tell parts of their own personal history.

Senile dementia affects the parts of the brain that control a lot of skills we take for granted, such as: communicating; remembering; concentrating; consequently the ability to understand and interact with other people at



The Havbogade House where Den Gamle By started the project.

social occasions is strongly affected. When the memory consists only of scattered fragments of facts and memories and the ability to express thoughts and needs is diminished, people with senile dementia tend to become increasingly isolated and introverted.

A house for the sessions

The house used for the programmes is not easily accessible due to old town environment of narrow alleys, steps, cobbled stones and no facilities for disabled persons. Nevertheless several groups of elderly people have managed to attend the sessions and the results were both astonishing and moving. Since 2006 the house has been offered as a general experience in close collaboration with the municipal department for elderly people, with many groups having participated.

Aarhus Municipality has, over the last three years, provided a greater number of programmes to local day care centres for free. Subsequently Den Gamle By open air museum is now well known to the day care centres.

The house of memory

The experiences from these first years of memory retrieval led to the idea of establishing a special flat targeted at the large group of elderly people who got married in the late 1940s and early 1950s. A project was also developed for a more suitable house to be placed in the planned Modern Town part of the museum. This new location would provide improved access through pavements, level asphalt roads outside the house, a broad and solid staircase and a lift inside. In 2007 the fundraising had completed and the building of The House of Memory began. The house was recently finished in 2012 and appears as an integrated part of the Modern Town project.

- The House of Memory consists of two elements:
- the shops: "Poul's Radio" and an embroidery store.
 - a flat from the 1950s.

The groups can visit the radio/TV store, listen to the music, look at the radios and TV-sets etc., or they can look at the designs and needlework techniques in the embroidery store. The flat consists of a kitchen, a living room, a dining room, a bedroom and a bathroom all furnished to look like the 1950s, with the possibility of later chronological adjustments for future generations.

The flat where the programmes take place is set as the home of a typical middle-class family in Denmark in the 1950s. In the kitchen you find an ice box, gas cookers and the pantry that was so common then. In the living room you find the housewife's sewing machine and the husband's new radio and gramophone. The practical needs of elderly groups have also been accommodated through the installation of a handicap toilet, a cloakroom and easy wheelchair access. In the neighbouring house there is a lift that can take you to the landing of the flat.



The house of Memory.

The new programme

Through the new flat Den Gamle By is ready to offer Memory Retrieval programmes twice a day all year round. The flat is equipped continuously according to the seasons of the year in order to give the guests the opportunity to rediscover how Easter was celebrated in the 1950s, how you prepared for the summer holidays, how you cooked the vegetables of the season, how you made jam, preserved and pickled fruits and how you celebrated Christmas. In the flat food will be cooked from time to time in order to create traces of well-known smells. On arrival the guests will be met by two members of staff performing the role of the housewife and her sister, both dressed and styled as women of the 1950s.

The visits are based on a fixed dramaturgic form but are also meant to provide room for the visitors to participate. Before a visit one of the staff members contacts the day care centre to collect some information about the former lives of the visitors in order to plan the visit. For example, if a female visitor used to own a mangle, the ironing board will be displayed, and the smell of newly ironed clothes that will be present along with the clothes themselves, folded and ready to be put in the cupboard. Thus traces of memories are opened for the elderly visitors to explore through smell, tactile sensation, and the sight and sound of the warm iron against the clothes.

A Memory Retrieval programme lasts between two and two and a half hour. The museum staff members that run these programmes have been given a special introduction to the dementia diseases, knowledge of Denmark in the 1950s, and have been trained in the asking technique, as well as improvisation techniques and dramaturgic methods. Furthermore the staff must know the theoretical background of the programmes and the way in which they are formed.

Research behind

Essentially, the staff at the museum came to realise that these programmes worked simply through first-hand experience. However researchers soon became interested in what was happening and over the years professor in psychology at Aarhus' University, Dorte Berntsen, and Ph.D. student Tina Jeppesen have followed the project closely.

The historical settings are created with authentic objects and the most accurate knowledge in order to create a time warp so the guests in the house feel as though they are in another period. During the development of this project three key persons participated: a curator from Den Gamle By, Tove Engelhard Mathiassen, specializing in home interiors; a coordinator from the municipal administration of Aarhus, Birgitte Kryger, who has a special knowledge of the conditions of elderly people suffering from senile dementia; and a professional educator, Henning Lindberg from Den Gamle By.

Results

More than fifty groups of elderly people suffering from senile dementia visit the museum every year in order to participate in Memory Retrieval programmes, and every visit bears clear signs of success. The general condition of the participants is considerably improved for up to 3–4 weeks after the visit. The participants are visibly happier and they do not cry for longer periods of time. They are also less violent for longer periods of time.

The cooperation with the Psychology Institute at the University of Aarhus, by Professor Dorte Berntsen¹³⁴, has resulted in an evaluation of the memory retrieval programmes. The results were as follows:

- the participants achieve more glimpses of memories during a visit to Den Gamle By than they do in their normal habitation,
- the participants have many more bursts of happiness,
- the participants engage with joy in social events,
- the participants express an enthusiasm in taking part,
- the participants comment on each other's stories,
- the participants reflect on their own lives.

The staff members at Den Gamle By learn a lot about the conditions of life in the 1950s through these elderly visitors, a valuable knowledge that is now written down and saved for the future.

Courses for healthcare assistants and auxiliary nurses

An offshoot of the memory retrieval programmes at the museum was the idea of creating courses for the staff of the day care centres. The courses were developed by Den Gamle By in cooperation with the local authorities of Aarhus Municipality. We felt it was important to gather together all the professionals involved: the museum staff, with the historical knowledge to make everything in the flat and the surroundings as realistic as possible, the healthcare staff with their knowledge of geriatric aspects and the special needs of people suffering from dementia, and the education staff with their pedagogical knowledge and understanding of the educational considerations to be made in the planning of the courses.

¹³⁴ Dorte Berntsen, "Forthcoming study," (Aarhus Universitet, Department of Psychology and Behavioural Sciences, Center on Autobiographical Memory Research CON AMORE 2013).

These courses contain:

- General information about dementia and how the staff can best help the patients to preserve their abilities, their skills, and thereby promote the patients' control over their own lives. Through daily memory retrieval it is possible to respect the individual and make the patients hold on to their identity.
- A sample of the Memory Retrieval programme in Den Gamle By so that they themselves can experience how sensuous impressions can retrieve long forgotten memories.
- A guided tour in Den Gamle By and information about the museum in general.

The participants at these courses get a folder with relevant articles, a list of relevant literature, and suggestions of how to integrate memory retrieval work into the daily routines at the day care centres.

Courses for voluntary staff members

The latest initiative has been the development of courses on memory retrieval for voluntary staff members. A recent development in society is the increasing use of volunteers in many sectors, not least the caring for elderly people. With this new course we aim to make voluntary workers capable of accompanying elderly people to Den Gamle By, of teaching them the ways of supporting the elderly people during the visit to the museum and afterwards helping to bring about some memories and work with them. There is the hope that such a course will appeal to a broader group of voluntary workers, and that it will inspire and qualify them to work with people suffering from dementia and support them in holding on to their identity.

The future

The overwhelming results of this project have convinced us that the special setting and the total experience of Den Gamle By open air museum is relevant to reach out to groups previously unthinkable at a museum. The success has encouraged us to initiate the development of other programmes: one year ago we began to offer special arrangements for teenagers who are suffering from ADHD and autism, and we have had encouraging results from offering special arrangements for girls and mothers with foreign cultural background.

We intend to increase this kind of development in the future.

The American museologist Stephen E. Weil, in a 1999 article about the constant change of American museums, stated that: "Museums must move

their focus away from being *about* something towards being *for* people".¹³⁵ In England the successful director of the National Museums in Liverpool stated similar beliefs when he said that "the museum must serve the society and not just attend collections and artefacts".¹³⁶ This is what we at Den Gamle By will try to do to reach out – not only to 'usual' museum visitors but also to people who are more or less unthinkable at a museum. Den Gamle By has around 350.000 visitors per year. A few thousand are mentally disabled – but we are happy if a museum visit succeeds in bringing a little happiness into their daily life.

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¹³⁵ Stephen E. Weil, "From Being *about* Something to Being *for* Somebody: The Ongoing Transformation of the American Museum," *Daedalus* 128, no. 3 (1999).

¹³⁶ in Julie Nightingale, "His story in the making. David Fleming, innovative director of Tyne and Wear museums," *The Guardian*, 24 January 2001.

MUSEUMS & MEMORIES – STIMULATING THE MEMORY AND ESTIMATING THE QUALITY OF LIFE

Abstract

*Is it possible for open air museums to use their resources to reach a new and growing target group? The group I refer to here are elderly people in the early stages of dementia with cognitive disabilities. This is a group which is growing as life expectancy rates increase. Open air museums have resources which include buildings, animals, field crops, objects, props and of course their assembled pedagogical methods. All these things make them suitable places for memory stimulation. Yet, could a collaboration between cultural institutions and social welfare services, across traditional boundaries, be beneficial to both parties? Could experience-based pedagogical methods, assembled from both the social welfare services and the museum sector, be used to tease the senses and awaken memories? Could these methods be used as tools to stimulate memories and improve the quality of life of this group? These are some of the key questions faced by Jamtli museum through the two projects *Do you remember?* (2009–2010) and *Museums & Memories* (2012–2013). My startingpoint in this article is the experiences gained by these projects, and in particular the second.*

Background

At Jamtli open preschool we offer activities based on cultural heritage. The target group is parents together with their children. The age of the children range from babies to toddlers up to six years of age. Grandparents are also welcome and frequently these are the ones accompanying their grandchildren, and sometimes great-grandchildren, to Jamtli.

One example which strongly comes to my mind, took place at Jamtli open preschool one day in September. The theme of the activities offered this particular week was “mountain life” and we focused on the return of the animals from the mountain pasture to the village farm. We had put all our big wooden animals outside, in the yard, in a long line. All the cows and

goats were going to spend winter indoors and the children had to help us clean them by using soft soap and scrubbing brushes. When one child arrived together with her grandmother they immediately started to clean the wooden animals and very soon the air smelled of soft soap. While brushing, the grandmother shared her childhood memories of working in the mountain pasture with her mother. Her memories were flowing and she really enjoyed sharing them with her grandchild, who listened intently.

At Jamtli open preschool we have often noticed that activities which are based on experiences well-known to older adults (e.g. grandparents) are very inspiring to this particular group of visitors. Very often they start talking to their grandchildren about their own childhood, about partaking in activities very similar to those replicated at the preschool. They also recognise the songs we sing as well as the fairy tales. Of course the historical surroundings at our open air museum is also something which affects them. These experiences, from an open preschool, made it evident to us how important it is to provide older adults with opportunities to connect with their own personal memories. Allowing older adults to actually remember, not only cognitively but through all senses, is important and helps retrieve forgotten memories. It enables communication between generations and creates well-being.

Jamtli has started two memory projects in collaboration with other museums and municipalities in Sweden and Norway. The projects were developed through our above-mentioned experiences, and also with inspiration drawn from reminiscence work both in Denmark and England.

The method of reminiscence

The method that we use in our Memory Project is based on reminiscence. We have chosen to focus on cultural heritage and have also tried to individualize the method by connecting it to the participant's own life story.

The idea originates from 1963, when American psychiatrist Robert Butler presented his studies of reminiscence and highlighted the importance for older people to have opportunities to remember previous experiences. Reminiscence became very popular in English retirement homes and in day care during the 1980s. Today it is used in a variety of ways, in different social and creative contexts. The characteristic feature of this method is that it is carried out in small groups with the aim of increasing well-being and quality of life.¹³⁷

The reminiscence method has been used in many places around the world and has been directed to different ages, both for healthy people and for people with various types of disabilities. In the care of people with de-

¹³⁷ S. Housden, *Reminiscence and lifelong learning* (Leicester: NIACE, 2007).

mentia, the method has been of great importance. Departing from what the person actually remembers, and focusing on what is still healthy, a sense of security is created and the person's self-esteem is increased.¹³⁸ It is helpful to the individual to support what he or she can and remembers, not what he or she no longer can. By imparting their own history and experiences to people who are interested in hearing them, their self-esteem is strengthened.

This method of reminiscence can help create a context for the dementia patient. Bridges can be built between the person's past and their present. Recognising his or her life story in someone else's may also be important for an individual's self-esteem, helping to break the down feelings of isolation and create new relationships. It is important that the reminiscence sessions are conducted in an open and tolerant atmosphere. Nothing is right or wrong – the person's own experience is always important during the sessions. A pleasant social interaction between participants is another benefit of the method.

Two memory projects

For the first project, "Do you remember?", five county museums from Sweden worked together. The project partners were divided into two groups and they all used cultural heritage to stimulate elderly people's memories. One group consisted of three different open air museums. These worked together to try find new methods of reaching the target group by using the different settings of the open air museums. The two other museums worked on making visits to nursing homes for the elderly, taking old objects and props into the environments and also creating exhibitions to go on tour around nursing homes. In addition to this the museums provided training about past times and activities connected to their local area for the staff at these nursing homes. The project was successful and because of the positive results we had achieved we wanted to develop our ideas further.

With financial support from the European Union's interregional funds, we had the opportunity to start a new project called "Museums and Memories". The funding made it possible to cooperate with the following museums: Ringve music museum with its botanic garden located in Trondheim, Norway; Murberget, an open air county museum in Härnösand, Sweden; and the open air museum of Jamtli in Östersund, Sweden. The municipalities in each region, and their departments for social welfare and care for elderly people, are also important parts of the project. This means that there is a mixture of staff, from nurses who specialize in the care of the elderly and those suffering from dementia, to occupational therapists and museum educators. This cooperation across traditional boundaries is very important for the project.

¹³⁸ Lotta Isacs and Helene Wallskär, *Låt minnena leva* (Stockholm: Gothia Förlag, 2004).

Different museums – different focuses

Jamtli

At Jamtli we use a 1940's setting – a time of military preparedness. The scene is set around a small farm house (a so called Per-Albin croft) with a small barn. Outside the yard lay the meadows and the fields. Small brushwood separates the croft from other settings at the open air museum. In the house the furniture and all other items are from the 1940s. Everything can be handled and used. Both the museum staff and the nurses who accompany the participants are dressed in clothes from the 1940s. For our guests it is like stepping into a time capsule.

Every Monday we have two groups of five people coming from nursing homes from the municipality of Östersund: the morning group is new each week in comparison to the afternoon group which returns for four consecutive weeks before a new group is brought in. The afternoon group consists of people who were only recently diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. The participants in the afternoon group still live at home, either with their families or alone with the help from visiting nurses. A partial aim of the project is to be a support and as a stress-relief for their families. It is very demanding to live together with a close relative who is diagnosed with dementia.

The groups are assembled by the occupational therapist related to the municipality's unit for social welfare together with the nursing homes. Occasionally the occupational therapist is supported in their decision-making by the staff working with dementia at the health centres in the municipality. The museum's staff members are not responsible for assembling the groups



The small croft used for reminiscence sessions at Jamtli. Photo: Jamtli.

as they have neither sufficient experience nor knowledge. The transportation of patients to Jamtli is arranged by the municipality.

We try to use cultural heritage to challenge and exhilarate the elderly, as a way of reviving old memories, stimulate communication and create well-being. Another aim of the project is to inspire the staff of the residential care to use our methods in their daily work at day-care centres, by using items, activities, music, and archive material such as photos. Another important goal of the project is to encourage participants to start attending the activities which are offered to patients suffering from memory problems at day-care centres. Through these activities they have the opportunity to meet the same nurses as they met at Jamtli which is a comfort for both the person suffering from dementia and their relatives. It is very important that a person with dementia is not isolated in his or her home.

Murberget

At Murberget, the county museum of Västernorrland, an old vicarage from the 1940s located in their open air museum is used.¹³⁹ Inside the dwelling house everything is from the 1940s, including the furniture and other objects, and everything can be handled and used. There is plenty of space for the elderly, many rooms to explore, and a nice living room with a fireplace by which to assemble. The big house is surrounded by a lovely garden with flowers, vegetables and berry bushes. The garden, as well as the house, is a very important trigger for stimulating memories alongside the activities put together for the elderly group.

Sessions at the old vicarage are for groups consisting of people diagnosed with dementia together with their relatives, staff from the museum and the municipality. During the autumn they have met on six occasions at the old vicarage in the open air museum.

Ringve music museum & botanic garden

Ringve museum is Norway's national museum of music and musical instruments with collections from all around the world. Ringve is situated just outside of Trondheim in a botanical garden.¹⁴⁰ The exhibitions are located in a big mansion which originates from 1850. The exhibitions, the botanical garden and the house, where the owner of the mansion once lived, are the places where the memory stimulation takes place. In addition to this, the group of elderly people that the Ringve museum works with have visited other museums in Trondheim.

¹³⁹ Murberget Museum, <http://www.murberget.se>.

¹⁴⁰ Ringve Museum, <http://ringve.no>.

During the project period, six people in the early stages of dementia came to visit Ringve once a week. The group came with two members of staff from the a health and welfare centre in Trondheim's municipality. The group was assembled by those members of staff and all the members of the group are, or have been, interested in music. The participants stayed for two hours and the visit consisted of elements such as: singing together, listening to music, visiting the botanical garden and the exhibitions, as well as a coffee break. The group explored different musical and botanic themes.

Methods – to individualise

Biography & Photo books

At Jamtli the programmes for the elderly are designed to fit the characteristics of the participating group. The different themes and settings at the open air museum are chosen so as to match the groups' backgrounds and interests, especially from their childhoods and youths. The experiences of the elderly participants are the most important factor in deciding themes and activities.

The occupational therapist has made individual interviews with the participants as well as group interviews with participants together with their relatives about their lives. A biography of each member in the group has been created and serves as a basis when individualising the activities. The museum's archives are used to find photos from their childhoods and youths and to create photo books. For example photos from their home villages, schools, work places, sports that they have been interested in, places that they liked to visit etc.

All members of the group get their own photo book and during the second meeting at Jamtli a review of each person's photo book is made. These books function as a way presenting the participants to each other: the enlarged black and white photos often start a lively and sprightly communication within the group. Perhaps they recognize the people and places represented in the photos. Thanks to these photos they realise that they sometimes share the same interests, experiences and memories. This feeling of being acknowledged helps the participants to re-establish their self-esteem, something that has been reduced during their illness because they have lost many of their past capabilities.

Themes & senses

At Murberget, three different themes are followed that easily revive memories. The themes are meant to be suitable both for men and women and cover a long time span. The illness of dementia is increasing among young-

er people and this particular programme tries to adapt to that fact. The themes are also individually adapted to the people in the different groups. Thanks to the collaboration with the municipality of Härnösand and the unit for the social well-being and care of elderly, it has been possible to use the participant's biographies in a similar way as at Jamtli. The themes are 'Memories of School', 'Harvest Time' and 'Christmas Memories'.

All three of the different museums in the project offer themes and activities that are connected to the time of year, their specific duties and different festivities, but of course music is the common thread at Ringve museum. The senses are stimulated through different tastes, scents, sounds and through the handling of objects. This is important in all offered activities. Repetitive movements, like grinding coffee on a coffee mill, sawing firewood or barking trees, have been much appreciated activities. Singing, listening to music and having a cup of coffee together have also proved to be very successful.

Prop & archive material

All objects, furniture, household utensils and other objects in the houses used at Jamtli and Murberget belong to the museums' prop collection and can therefore be used and handled. Through looking, touching and feeling the objects, it is easier to remember different episodes and courses of events from the past. The objects help the group to find their own islands of memories.

To further develop our work with objects, staff at Jamtli and Murberget are currently creating special prop collections on different topics called "memory-boxes". These boxes are intended to be lent to nursing homes or to other homes who develop activities for elderly people.



Photo of woodworking, from the memory-boxes.
Photo: Lars Olov Westin, Jamtli bildarkiv.



Music from the 1940s during one of the Open House Days at Jamtli. Photo: Jamtli.

Materials from the museums' archives are also used, for example enlarged photos connected to different themes: woodworking or washing clothes. At Jamtli the same target group can borrow photos from us or simply look at them at our website in their institutions or homes.

Open House Days at Jamtli

Another Jamtli initiative with similar aims to the projects discussed above is the twice annual 'Open House Day'. Once again the target group is the elderly people living either in nursing homes or at home with home care service. During these days various activities are put on, such as washing clothes, baking and listening to a famous singer from the 1940s. Usually over 150 people join us for the open day during the spring with their relatives and staff. During autumn we have a similar event which focuses on life as a woodcutter.

During these 'Open House Days' Jamtli cooperates with Estrad Norr, a regional cultural institution in the field of music and theatre. Together we have started to develop a music programme that appeals to younger people suffering from dementia. Jamtli's own volunteer organisation, Jamtli's Gynare, helps us during these days by serving coffee and home baked cakes.

They also keep Jamtli's baking house open and sell freshly baked traditional flat bread. Their help is very much appreciated.

This form of activity is intended to reach a large number of visitors during two intense days. They give us the opportunity to inform participants about our work and therefore to reach new visitors and staff from the municipality's unit for care for elderly people.

Experiences

Conversations about a theme

To use a specially selected topic as a starting point for a conversation works very well. Associations made with such topics can take the conversation in other directions than intended, but through the specific theme and its props, we can return the conversation to the intended topic. Our ambition is that the conversation should interest and involve everyone.

In group dynamics it is clear that there are both storytellers and listeners. We see that the 'listeners' enjoy the meetings, although only listening to others and making shorter remarks during the conversation. We can see how different personalities become involved in different ways according to their own potential. Different subject matters and the interaction between the different members of the group trigger them to share their stories and experiences as children and youths. The participation of people, coming in with new perspectives and stories, make the work constantly evolve. The group members are also affected positively by being listened to. As museum educators our role in the conversation is to be moderators – to try to adapt to the participants' reflections and also maintain the main thread of the conversation.¹⁴¹

Props and settings/environment

Our methods are built around the use of props in a setting. These settings create a sort of backdrop and their function is to inspire people to open up and to generate conversations. For example, at Murberget the vicarage becomes a three-dimensional experience and acts as a kind of 'memory box'.

Some people can, because of their illness, become confused in modern environments. We have seen that the old environment of the vicarage can provide a soothing effect. Their memories are brought out and verbalized through the atmosphere, smells, furniture and objects. The whole setting

¹⁴¹ Minnen och Museer INTERREG project, "Interrim report number 3," (2013 forthcoming).

creates a sense of security. We see this through their comments and stories, as well as through practical tasks such as making a fire and maintaining it with wood. The elements found in these environments, but not in modern environments, strengthen people. In many cases we see that relatives of the participants become happy and confident when they see how their beloved ones regain their former capabilities and enthusiasm. They are happy to see their relatives recreating their previous skills through carrying out the chores and everyday tasks as they have done so throughout their entire life.¹⁴²

Archive material

A positive spinoff effect of our work with elderly people is that a lot of information about past periods and places is shared with the museums, thereby improving the museums' knowledge and information of the time period. For example, at Jamtli we have had help with identifying photos from our archives. A new challenge is to find the best way to record these materials. Starting a recording machine or making an interview during a conversation with the whole group is not to be recommended. Focus must be on the whole group and not just one person.

Relatives and staff

The latest project has been organized by the partner museums and the collaborating municipalities differently to the previous projects. Murberget has been working with groups that consist of people with dementia together with their relatives and the staff from the municipality responsible for the care and support of the relatives. Their experience shows the importance of turning to those who are close to people with dementia, their families and staff, in helping to create an overall picture about the person suffering from dementia. Collaborating with these parties creates the positive effect of helping to promote the person's general conditions, and recognizes the relative as someone who is also affected by the disease. Murberget's experience provides families and staff with new approaches to coping with the illness. By working with cultural heritage we create topics not related to the disease. Instead we focus on what is healthy: the memories and the skills that still remain. Staff and relatives receive a new positive input to the dementia patient, which may facilitate their daily lives and ultimately affect all involved in a positive way.

¹⁴² Ibid.

Crossing borders

The cooperation with the administration for the care of the elderly in our municipalities has been invaluable to the planning and implementation of the previous projects. As museum staff we are not experts in working with older people with dementia. This expertise lies among the nurses and other staff who care for the elderly, in another sector of society, not in the cultural sector. Our expertise lies in working in historic educational environments with different audiences, particularly children and families.

Throughout this project we have been “forced” to cooperate over traditional borders, to mix our experiences and competencies. The museum’s resources and competences in using historical settings/environments, objects and activities has been combined with the impressive skills of the staff who care for and treat elderly people with memory loss.

A mutual exchange of experiences and knowledge has been the common thread in these projects. We at the museums have gained many new insights and, above all, a new attitude to and knowledge about dementia which has been invaluable to the project and contributed significantly to our training and skills.

It is in the interface between cultural knowledge, nursing knowledge and demented persons past memories and life skills that the development of these projects takes place.¹⁴³

Our dream for the future

With these projects we also have a dream for the future – that a permanent form of activity for elderly people could be established in cooperation between museums and municipalities. We are convinced that open-air museums are fantastic surroundings for elderly people and for the stimulation of different kinds of memory.

In both of our projects we have sought out new and untraditional forms of cooperation between cultural institutions and the care of older people with memory problems. With them we hope to increase the quality of life and to create more positive ways of life for the target groups. Perhaps we have found one way of reaching social inclusion and letting the museums make a difference.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

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VOLUNTEERS AND HERITAGE

Abstract

Is working with volunteers in the heritage sector something good? That is a much debated question and this study shows that the opinions differ greatly. But why does some people find it beneficial for organisations and volunteers while others think it should be avoided? And who are the volunteers? This article shows that the way you organise volunteers is of great importance to how they are perceived. There are many obstacles to consider when working with volunteers, such as what they can do, what they are allowed to do and how to work with them in a way that make both parties benefit from the experience. Heritage sites which work with volunteers are usually more positive about the experience than those which do not work with volunteers. The volunteers themselves are usually content with their efforts and happy to be part of a social context.

Introduction

Today it is estimated that over half of all Swedes are involved in volunteer work in some way.¹⁴⁴ Sweden has a long tradition of non-profit work within various associations and popular movements, which often work with politics, sobriety or religion. Among such associations, sports clubs make up the largest group. However, because statistics often combine the cultural sector with sports it is difficult to make any assessment of volunteer work in the cultural sector and it is even harder to find information about the cultural heritage sector. In many other countries, volunteer work is organised differently: Different companies and organisations often accept and organise volunteers but this practice is not widespread in Sweden. When discussing volunteer or non-profit work here in Sweden, we normally mean different kinds of associations or clubs, and 86 per cent of those who perform volunteer work are members in the organisation they work for.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ "Nationell rapport avseende Sveriges arbete för att nå Europeiska unionens gemensamma mål för volontärverksamhet," (Regeringskansliet, Integrations- och jämställdhetsdepartementet, ungdomspolitiska enheten, 2007).

¹⁴⁵ Filip Wijkström, *Svenskt organisationsliv – framväxten av en ideell sektor* (Stockholm: Ekonomiska forskningsinstitutet vid handelshögskolan i Stockholm, 1999). 8.

* The source material was gathered with help of Malin Wolczynska.

It is important to take a closer look at volunteer work as it contributes to society in different ways. Volunteering can help to create a meaningful existence for those who participate, it can contribute to a better existence for others, but it also has economic benefits. Perhaps this is why it is an unexpressed wish on the part of cultural minister Lena Adelsohn Liljeroth that cultural organisations use volunteers to a greater extent.¹⁴⁶ She has stated: "I want to stimulate our public bodies – museums, art centres and so on – to work more with volunteers. It is a good way to reach out to groups that we have not had much contact with in the past. We have much to learn, in particular from the Anglo-Saxon world."¹⁴⁷

Minister for Gender Equality, Nyamko Sabuni, touched upon the same subject when she said that, "Sweden has a long tradition for non-profit engagement to help others and attend to problems in society. An important challenge for civil society is to attract people who have never been active in an association before".¹⁴⁸ In the EU volunteer work is also seen as something that is positive in many ways. The EU has as a clearly stated objective within its youth policy to promote volunteerism among young people: within this objective is the wish to make the young more attractive to the job market, to give them occupational experience and to strengthen democratic engagement and active citizenship among youth.¹⁴⁹ In other words, they have decided that volunteer work is something that is good for the individuals who execute the work. This applies not only to young people, but also to the elderly: "To promote voluntary work among older people in Europe, particularly of those at risk, is one of the most important goals on the EU's political agenda", a report states.¹⁵⁰ At the same time, unions have expressed concern that volunteers may have a repressive effect. For instance, the trade union DIK, who has many members in the cultural heritage sector, writes on its website: "Regularly using volunteers in ordinary activities risks [...] undermining the institutions' professional expertise, competence and quality."¹⁵¹ Among unions, therefore, there is a desire to protect employees' professional status by

¹⁴⁶ "SVT Cultural news 2 December 2010," http://svtplay.se/v/2255083/sa_fort_man_foreslar_nagot_sa_letar_folk_upp_problemet.

¹⁴⁷ Elin Viksten, "Kulturministern vill se fler volontärer," *Dagens nyheter*, 19 November 2010.

¹⁴⁸ "The government, Department for Education. Press release 16 Februari 2011."

¹⁴⁹ "Nationell rapport avseende Sveriges arbete för att nå Europeiska unionens gemensamma mål för volontärverksamhet," 2007. 15.

¹⁵⁰ Anja Ehlers, Gerhard Naegele, and Monika Reichert, *Volunteering by older people in the EU* (Dublin: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2011). 5.

¹⁵¹ Fackförbundet DIK, "Volontärer på arkiv, bibliotek och museer," (2010).

stressing that the work requires skill, know-how and therefore cannot be performed by just anybody.

Thus, there is a dilemma that seems to be especially pronounced in the cultural heritage sector. Center to the discussion is the fact that volunteers have not been present in the cultural heritage sector to the same extent as in other sectors of society in recent years. Whether you are talking about training a youth team in a sport, or serving as one of the 2,000 volunteers that are needed for the 2015 World Ski Championships, volunteerism is seen as obvious in the world of sports.¹⁵² Similarly, we have not heard any debate about the fact that the police are now using volunteers.¹⁵³ The main question in this study, therefore, is what makes the use of volunteers in the cultural sector so much more objectionable than elsewhere. Why are there such differing opinions of volunteerism in this sector?

Volunteers can be seen as an asset and a resource for cultural heritage institutions, as well as a threat to the personnel of the same institutions. There is great uncertainty as to how to handle volunteers so that their work produces added value, they feel they are needed, and so that personnel do not feel their jobs are threatened. There are, however, very few studies that examine this delicate relationship between volunteers and staff and report on whether there truly are any repressive effects. What are the problems, both real and imagined, that arise in working with volunteers at cultural heritage sites? Can good examples be found of cases where volunteer work has worked well, i.e. value was added without creating any repressive effects? To answer this question we must ask who the volunteers are, and what the volunteer work and the organisation of the work means to them. We also must look at the cultural heritage organisations themselves and ask ourselves what added value and challenges they see in working with volunteers. These are the questions that will be the focus of this study.

Although work with volunteers can be problematic throughout the cultural sector, I have limited this study to large and small cultural heritage sites which mainly aim to show cultural environments or cultural history. As these sites can range from the large national museums to community centres, this means that we can see a breadth of activities and must consider a variety of factors such as the impact of the rural or urban environment or the degree to which professionalization has taken place. Here, the term “museum” refers to ICOM’s definition of a museum: museums are institutions that

¹⁵² ”Sweski wants volunteers,” <http://www.sweski.com/skid-vm-soumlker-2000-frivilliga.5094029.html>.

¹⁵³ ”Polisens volontärer,” <http://www.polisen.se/Vastmanland/Om-polisen/Sa-arbetar-Polisen/Brottsforebyggande-arbete/Polisens-volontarer/>.

work to acquire, conserve, research and communicate cultural heritage.¹⁵⁴ In addition, the museums in this study also have salaried staff. Destinations of cultural history are defined as destinations based upon cultural history and are operated by non-profit entities or other sites that attract visitors, but which can be seen neither as community centres nor museums. The study also refers to cultural heritage institutions which are professional in nature and have salaried employees, such as museums and archives.

The volunteer concept

In Sweden, there has long been talk of “ideellt arbete” (non-profit work) or “frivilligarbete” (volunteer work). In English-speaking countries terms such as “philanthropy” or “charity” are used. In recent years, and perhaps to achieve more unified terminology in the EU, there have been more and more references made to “volunteer work”. When you talk about volunteer work (“volontärbete”) in Sweden, it often makes one think of travelling to another country to perform charitable work. “Frivilligt arbete” or “ideell verksamhet” are perhaps clearer for many, but these terms are often associated only with involvement in different “frivilligorganisationer” (volunteer organisations), which, in turn, organise and structure the work. The meanings of the terms “ideellt arbete”, “frivilligarbete” and “volontärbete” are, in principle, the same, and in this study the terms are used synonymously. “Volunteer” is defined here as a person who voluntarily and without remuneration works for a person other than him-/herself or someone in the immediate family, e.g. an organisation of some sort. It is important that the work is without economic compensation, as this would create demands or expectations of performance and thus eliminate the voluntary aspect in the work. An important aspect of volunteer work is that it must be beneficial. Its benefits do not have to be proven, but it should feel useful and meaningful for the person performing the work.¹⁵⁵

What do we know about volunteer work?

There are different traditions in different parts of the world when it comes to volunteer work. In countries strongly influenced by Great Britain, former colonies and Commonwealth countries for instance, volunteerism is a tradition that is very much alive. On the other hand in countries that have

¹⁵⁴ ICOM, ”Museum definition,” <http://icom.museum/who-we-are/the-vision/museum-definition.html>.

¹⁵⁵ ”Fria viljor lyfter Sverige. Det frivilliga arbetets uppgift, innehåll och värde idag och i framtiden,” in *Rapport från socialstyrelsens årliga konferens om den ideella sektorn, 15 March 2005* (Stockholm: Socialstyrelsen, 2005), 26–27.

historically been under communist control, volunteer work is uncommon and viewed with scepticism.¹⁵⁶ In various research reports on volunteerism in the EU, it is in Great Britain, together with Austria, the Netherlands and Sweden, that volunteerism is most common. Around 40 per cent of the adult population (in Sweden this is about 50 per cent¹⁵⁷) participate in volunteering compared to the EU average of only 22 per cent.¹⁵⁸ These numbers refer to all forms of volunteer activity taking place in various sectors. There are indications, however, that the pattern is the same in the cultural heritage sector. Out of the 100 most visited museums in the world, half have a volunteer programme. Fourteen of these museums are in the EU, and 36 are in other parts of the world. In the EU, nine out of 14 are in Great Britain, and of those in the rest of the world, 26 out of 36 are in North America and Australia.¹⁵⁹ These statistics would appear to indicate that the tradition for volunteerism in the cultural heritage sector is strongest in the Anglo-Saxon countries.

The Swedish tradition for volunteer work is rooted in the active civic and club work/activities that have been functioning in the country for a very long time. From the mid-1800s, many active associations have contributed to improvements in society through work on development, democratic issues and politics, support for the sick or poor, sports, sobriety or culture and cultural heritage. Many of the museums that exist today were started by associations such as community centres, art or handicrafts associations and have since become organisations that now have teams of permanent staff that run the activities. Sweden also has favourable conditions for volunteerism. One study that looked at the conditions that favour high participation in volunteer work found that countries that are Protestant, that have a long tradition of involving democratic institutions and which have a social democratic or liberal system of government often have high levels of participation.¹⁶⁰

Those who become volunteers in Sweden are often active in types of activities different to those in other countries. In Sweden, leisure activities (e.g. acting as a trainer in a sports association or a treasurer in a coin collectors' club) account for a large part of the volunteer work taking place, while volunteerism in the rest of Europe has more to do with social work.¹⁶¹ Volunteer

¹⁵⁶ Izabella Csordás, "Volunteer management in cultural institutions" (International workshop 6–10 November 2011, Budapest, 2011), 3.

¹⁵⁷ "Nationell rapport avseende Sveriges arbete för att nå Europeiska unionens gemensamma mål för volontärverksamhet," 2007.

¹⁵⁸ Csordás, "Volunteer management in cultural institutions", 3.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ehlers, Naegle, and Reichert, *Volunteering by older people in the EU*. 13.

¹⁶¹ Agneta Stark and Robert Hamrén, *Frivilligarbetets kön kvinnor, män och frivilligt arbete. En översikt* (Stockholm: Svenska kommunförbundet, 2000). 62.



The volunteers connected to Malmö museums are members of the tram association.
Photo: Johanna Rylander/Malmö Museer.

work in Sweden has, in recent decades, been reduced to fewer people despite the number of hours of volunteer work staying the same. This means that fewer people are working more. For those who are already active, there is a tendency to become active in more non-profit activities.¹⁶² On average, those who volunteer spend 14 hours a month on these activities.¹⁶³

One focus area of previous research has been how many people are members in the different associations. In the mid-1990s the Swedish Agency for Administrative Development conducted a study into the socio-economic effects of volunteer work and found that each Swede was, on average, a member of 1,3 associations. The most common type of involvement is with sports clubs, in which approximately 34 per cent of all those who are members of an association participate.¹⁶⁴ One can identify three categories of people involved in associations. First, there are those who pay their membership

¹⁶² Lena Liljeroth, *Frivillighetens kraft* (Stockholm: Timbro, 2000). 8.

¹⁶³ "Nationell rapport avseende Sveriges arbete för att nå Europeiska unionens gemensamma mål för volontärverksamhet," 2007. 4.

¹⁶⁴ Statskontoret, *I samhällets intresse? En samhällsekonomisk studie av den ideella sektorn*, 1995:7 (Stockholm, 1995). 36 ff.

fee, but who do not necessarily do anything more. Then there are those who actively work in the association and, lastly, those who participate in the activities.¹⁶⁵ It is not clear, however, how the different researchers asked their questions in order to determine who the volunteers were. The EU study on active aging asked, for instance, whether the individual *participated actively* in or did volunteer work for any of the listed types of organisations.¹⁶⁶ Studies such as these count the number of volunteers based on active participation in an association, which may indicate that the stated numbers of volunteers are significantly higher than the actual number of volunteers. There is a difference, as we have pointed out, between actively participating in an association (playing basketball, singing in a choir etc.) and carrying out volunteer work in the association (coaching a basketball team, leading a choir etc.). One study, which discusses how many members in an association are also volunteers, found that 5–8 per cent of the members play a role as volunteer.¹⁶⁷

Consequently, the fact that in many European studies Sweden is seen as a country where volunteer work is common (the above report points out that 55 per cent of the population in Sweden are volunteers¹⁶⁸) may only be because many Swedes are active members of clubs – they train at the gym, embroider at the needlework association and attend the political association's lectures – rather than volunteers. Many studies on volunteer work are thus unreliable.

Earlier research on non-profit activities has also examined what different organisations, clubs and associations add to society. Civil society, of which associations and volunteer work is a part, fulfil important social, political and economic functions. Civil society includes traditional popular movements, but also other work which individuals perform without remuneration – in organisations, companies, associations, clubs, etc. Civil society is also generally defined as including family life and social networks.¹⁶⁹ This is not clear cut, however. Other definitions of civil society include that which is not the public sector, the business world or the family/household, but instead friendships and neighbours are included. That means that civil society includes associations, charities and individual volunteer projects in

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. 26–37.

¹⁶⁶ Eurobarometer, "Active Ageing," in *Special Eurobarometer 378* (2012), 88. The question was formulated: "Do you currently participate actively in or do voluntary work for one or more of the following organisations?"

¹⁶⁷ Statskontoret, *I samhällets intresse? En samhällsekonomisk studie av den ideella sektorn*. 38.

¹⁶⁸ Eurobarometer, "Active Ageing," 88.

¹⁶⁹ Stark and Hamrén, *Frivilligarbetets kön kvinnor, män och frivilligt arbete. En översikt*. 17

other sectors, for instance being on the parent-teacher association at a school that belongs to the public sector, as well as helping a neighbour.¹⁷⁰

It is often argued that association life is important for a democratic society, both as an education in democracy for its members and as a channel for expressing citizens' opinions.¹⁷¹ Associations and non-profit organisations can thus play a role in civil society as opinion-shapers and by being the voice of the people. Civil society is important for creating communities or networks of people who share common interests or opinions.¹⁷² Engaging in civil society allows individuals to gain influence, new contacts or participate in a context that enables an individual to gain social capital. For members or volunteers, participation creates a social network and a sense of belonging.¹⁷³ Often we get involved in volunteer work through an invitation from someone we know. This means that social networks, financial standing, where one lives, education, etc. are important factors in determining who is invited and who is not.¹⁷⁴ Individuals are still largely controlled by their gender, social class and other aspects reflected in their social networks. Many researchers claim, however, that we are less and less driven by this tradition when we choose our engagement, as society is becoming all the more individualistic and individuals' liberties and opportunities are therefore becoming more important.¹⁷⁵ However, there is little to support this assertion in the empirical data examined here. We will discuss this in more depth later on.

Another concept that has been used more and more since the 1990s is "social economy". In 1998 the Swedish government did a study into the definition and use of this term¹⁷⁶ and, in a motion from the Green party in 2005, social economy was defined concisely as movements that, "have a social objective for their activities, where economics and possible profit are only a means to this end".¹⁷⁷ In the social economy, there is both volunteer work and professional work, i.e. both volunteers and employees. The term "social

¹⁷⁰ Socialstyrelsen, *Genus och civilt samhälle* (Stockholm, 2004). 10–11.

¹⁷¹ Wijkström, *Svenskt organisationsliv – framväxten av en ideell sektor*. 5–6.

¹⁷² Ibid. 11.

¹⁷³ Socialstyrelsen, *Genus och civilt samhälle*. 18–19.

¹⁷⁴ Stark and Hamrén, *Frivilligarbetets kön kvinnor, män och frivilligt arbete. En översikt*. 62.

¹⁷⁵ Magnus Boström et al., *Den organiserade frivilligheten* (Malmö: Liber, 2004). 11–12.

¹⁷⁶ Swedish Government, Ds 1998:48, "Social ekonomi i EU-landet Sverige – tradition och förnyelse i samma begrepp," <http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c4/19/27/6a665b14.pdf>.

¹⁷⁷ "Document from the Swedish Parliament: Motion 2005/06:Fi229. Social ekonomi – en sektor med möjligheter," http://www.riksdagen.se/webbnav/?nid=410&dok_id=GT02Fi229. Chapter 4. The motion was rejected, but contains a number of interesting definitions of social economy.

economy” is similar to the term “civil society”, even though you emphasize different aspects of this sector. The motion further states that “a social economy’s activities often arise when the public sector or the local private business community fails or withdraws from their commitments in a local area”.¹⁷⁸ The public sector’s decline in the 1990s meant that much of the research done on volunteers studied how people got involved and joined together in new groups in order to provide basic services that were needed in sparsely populated areas where services were disappearing.¹⁷⁹ The volunteer work was analysed from different perspectives, with a focus upon the benefits to society and the economy. The social work carried out by volunteer organisations, in practice often by women, was in focus.¹⁸⁰

Partnerskapet för lokal utveckling och social ekonomi (a network of representatives of the social economy in eastern Sweden) also believes that the social economy is something between the private and public sectors and compares the term to “civil society” or the “tertiary sector”.¹⁸¹ The social economy, like civil society, is thus an arena where people take the initiative to contribute to society as a whole. For this study it is significant to note that volunteer activities belong to civil society and the social economy, regardless of whether they take place in a community centre, sports club or other type of association, or as an individual effort for a museum in the public or private sector. What characterises civil society is precisely the fact that people are free to choose the context and extent of their involvement.¹⁸²

Tied to the notion of civil society is the concept of citizenship. In the 1800s society transformed from a collective society of subjects to an individual society of citizens who could actively participate in society and debates and have the ability to influence them. Active citizenship has become so important today that the EU, for instance, has created an entire programme to promote it.¹⁸³ Active citizenship means that individuals are active in relation to many different aspects of society – taking part in building society and shaping it, as well as being active in social debates. In the EU, active citizenship is frequently tied to education. Europe’s citizens must be given skills

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. Chapter 4.

¹⁷⁹ Erik Amnå, ”Ideell verksamhet: förutsättningar, organisering och betydelse. Handlingsprogram för forskning,” ed. Civildepartementet (Stockholm: Fritzes offentliga publikationer, 1995), 11–12.

¹⁸⁰ Socialstyrelsen, *Genus och civilt samhälle*. 19–20.

¹⁸¹ ”PLUS – Partnerskapet för lokal utveckling och social ekonomi,” <http://www.socialekonomi-oms.se/socialekonomi.html>.

¹⁸² Socialstyrelsen, *Genus och civilt samhälle*. 12.

¹⁸³ EACEA, ”Citizenship Programme 2007–2013,” http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/programme/about_citizenship_en.php.

in democracy and opportunities to influence, so that they have a chance to make their voice heard politically. In other words, giving legitimacy to what we do by people exercising their right to vote, asking questions and joining various organisations is a matter of democracy. Learning through involvement in civil society, in volunteer work, or through work with human rights are also framed in this democratic context. Life-long informal learning is also stressed as something that is important in enabling all people have the chance to become involved and concerned citizens.¹⁸⁴

Parallel to this societal development, where citizenship and civil society have come into focus, is the way in which volunteer commitment and the organisation of volunteer work is changing. It is therefore a good idea to look beyond the confines of traditional associations. Involvement is shifting from the large popular movements, with their collective nature, to something with more of a focus on individuals. Instead of fighting together for a political orientation, sobriety or religion, “leisure services” are sought out in various hobby clubs, sports clubs and cultural associations.¹⁸⁵ As the wish to control our own involvement increases, our involvement in traditional non-profit associations has declined.¹⁸⁶

This shift means that we risk missing an important part of volunteering if we only look at organisations/associations, as earlier research has done. There is also volunteer work carried out by individuals who are not organised through associations. There can be those who provide a service without being a part of any organisation or any network, for instance helping a neighbour shop or mow the lawn. There are also volunteers who work for an organisation that is primarily run by professionals, for instance police volunteers, but also for museums and other cultural heritage sites.

Professionalization

Professionalization in the volunteer sector and civil society has increased and this is also tied to the supply of resources. Organisations that in the early 1900s were non-profit and which were built on member fees began, in the later part of the century, to take in resources from elsewhere. At the same time there has also been a professionalization of the volunteer sector,

¹⁸⁴ “European Youth Portal – Active citizenship,” http://europa.eu/youth/active_citizenship/index_eu_en.htm; “Learning for Active Citizenship,” http://ec.europa.eu/education/archive/citizen/citiz_en.html.

¹⁸⁵ Amnå, ”Ideell verksamhet: förutsättningar, organisering och betydelse. Handlingsprogram för forskning,” 56.

¹⁸⁶ ”Nationell rapport avseende Sveriges arbete för att nå Europeiska unionens gemensamma mål för volontärverksamhet,” 2007.

making organisations more prone to hire staff and then recruit even more to work for the organisation's objectives. Consequently this has led to a decline of member significance.¹⁸⁷ This has also resulted in an increase of organisations that have both staff and volunteers. The degree of professionalization, that is the number of trained permanent staff, naturally affects the work of volunteers within the organisation.

Professionalization is an interesting factor in the cultural heritage sector, as the trade union DIK has stated. Professionalization is an important concept for defining the skills and knowledge of some staff compared to others.¹⁸⁸ Most professions in the cultural heritage sector are relatively young. Ethnologists, museum educators, building curators, curators, keepers of antiquities, etc. are all professions that, in their present form, arose during the 1900s. Many museums were started by non-profit organisations which, early on, managed the activities themselves until these were gradually taken over by professionals. For this reason, the skills and knowledge of professionals are not always appreciated. As the cultural heritage professions are not yet that well established, trade unions, employees, and cultural heritage sites view the return to using volunteers as a threat. At the same time, professionals possess in-depth knowledge and skills that give coherence and breadth of perspective that is very valuable for the cultural heritage sites and which is important for the visitor's experience at the cultural heritage site. This is also pointed out by the trade union DIK when they write in the volunteer policy that "the activities of the cultural institutions must be imbued with professional knowledge, skill and quality".¹⁸⁹ Professionalism is thus a very relevant concept for this study.

It is precisely the tensions between volunteers and professionals that give rise to debate and problems, and constitute an area that previous research has put very little focus on. There is a project report which studies volunteers at museums in Sweden and touches on the tensions that exist between staff and volunteers.¹⁹⁰ This report does not, however, say much about who the

¹⁸⁷ Apostolis Papakostas, "Nya förutsättningar för frivilligorganisationer," in *Den organiserade frivilligheten*, ed. Anders Forssell, Magnus Boström, Kerstin Jacobsson, Kristina Tamm Hallström (Malmö: Liber, 2004), 59 ff.

¹⁸⁸ See e.g. Volontärbyrån, "Professionalisering. Förväntningar på volontärer och volontärsamordnare," <http://www.volontarbyran.org/documents/Professionalisering.pdf>.

¹⁸⁹ Fackförbundet DIK, "Volontärer på arkiv, bibliotek och museer."

¹⁹⁰ Arbets museum, *Museer med nya krafter. Ett pilotprojekt om frivilligarbete på museer 2002–2004* (Norrköping, 2004). The report comes from a project carried out at Labour Museum, Eskilstuna Museums, Music Museum, Norrsundet Labour Museum and Värmland Museum 2002–2004.



Karlshamn's museum is still run entirely by volunteers who tend to all tasks. Here is Lisbeth Northfell guiding visitors in the house of Skottberg. Photo: Solvig Andas.

volunteers are or how common volunteers are. Instead, it serves more as a collection of examples as to how the volunteer activities work at these museums and what has been learnt by them. It is therefore important to report on how the professional staff and volunteers relate to each other.

Intra- and extra-beneficial groups

As previous research indicates volunteerism is widespread in Sweden today and is primarily organised in the traditional manner through different associations. In the area of cultural heritage there are many associations with volunteer activities, such as community centres, handicraft associations and art associations. That is uncontroversial. What can lead to questioning and boundary-setting is when it turns into a battle between volunteers and professionals. Education and professional expertise are important components of this, and when volunteers and professionals work in the same sphere, tensions can arise.

Alix Slater is a British researcher who has studied associations and clubs that are affiliated with museums in Great Britain. She has called these affiliated associations and clubs "membership schemes" and has categorised them by three groups depending upon how involved they are in the museum's activities. On one end of the scale there are the social clubs that are run entirely by volunteers, independently of the museum, with little influence on the museum's strategies and with no plans for assessment, marketing or fundraising. Often, recruitment to such groups is done through contacts and they receive benefits such as private showings or publications. Next there are the "public members" schemes, which Slater, in turn, divides into subcategories.

The associations in this category are more oriented towards contributing to the museum's activities than the social clubs and work more actively with recruiting members and raising money for the museum. They are often closely tied to the museums through their participation in the museum's strategies through formalised collaboration, and they are likely to have a volunteer coordinator or similar person at the museum with whom they cooperate. At the other end of the scale we find associations that are integrated in the museum's structure, where the activities and plans are harmonised with the museum's and there are different methods of marketing, fundraising and evaluation. Slater calls these types of organisations "integrated membership" schemes and they are often run by one of the museum's staff.¹⁹¹ This categorisation builds on the American researcher Horton Smith's study of different organisations in which he finds that there are "public benefit groups", that is groups/associations that work to improve society in various ways and which focus their efforts outwardly. There are also "member benefit groups" that work in the best interest of its members and which focus on members themselves benefitting or doing fun things. Between these categorisations there is a group that he calls "mixed benefit groups", with mixed interests.¹⁹²

Organizations run by its members Social Clubs (Slater)/ Member Benefit Groups (Smith)	Organizations with strong ties to cultural heritage sites Public Members' Scheme (Slater)/ Mixed benefit Groups (Smith)	Organizations run by cultural heritage sites Integrated Membership Scheme (Slater)/ Public Benefit Groups (Smith)
Focus on members' best interests		Focus on cultural heritage site's best interests
Intra-beneficial		Extra-beneficial

Figure 1: Overview of cultural heritage sites' organisation and what they focus on / are driven by.

¹⁹¹ Alix Slater, "Revisiting typologies of membership schemes in museums and galleries," in *Museum management and marketing*, ed. Richard Sandell and Robert R. Janes (Oxon, UK: Routledge, 2007), 380 ff.

¹⁹² Horton Smith, "Public Benefit and Member Benefit Nonprofit, Voluntary Groups," *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 22, no. 1 (1993): 57.

Slater further builds on Horton Smith's¹⁹³ ideas when she describes the nature of the different types of associations that she has identified. She uses the term *intra-beneficial* to describe an organisation's focus on their own activities, as she observes it among "social clubs", and *extra-beneficial* for the "integrated membership schemes" which focus more on the museum's needs.¹⁹⁴ Slater's conclusion is that how beneficial an association is for a museum depends not on the number of members, but on how they are organised and suggests that it is probably better for the museum to have an association that is extra-beneficial, i.e. a group that is in tune with the museum's strategies and which aims to work in the best interest of the museum.¹⁹⁵

Here, I will use the terms intra-beneficial and extra-beneficial to describe the focus that drives different groups. Slater's study concerns British conditions and, naturally, may not be directly transferable to Swedish conditions. Examination of the organisation of volunteers, however, can give us some clues as to what the relationship between the cultural heritage site and the volunteer groups may look like. The concept of intra- and extra-beneficial can be used to clarify the objectives of different types of activities. Where on the scale between intra-beneficial and extra-beneficial volunteers figure also influences the relationship between volunteers and staff, as staff are involved at varying degrees in the work and organisation of the volunteers.

Sources and selection

Prior research in Sweden suggests that the "leisure sector" is the area in which the largest group of volunteers are involved.¹⁹⁶ More specific studies would suggest that about five per cent of all active volunteers are active in the cultural sector.¹⁹⁷ The concept of a cultural sector includes cultural heritage institutions, theatrical companies or music activities, etc. One previous research report examining volunteers and friendship societies tied to Swedish museums suggests that about half of the regional museums and 80 per cent of the national museums have some sort of friendship society or other organisation tied to them. Many of these organisations are driven by intra-beneficial objectives and do not contribute any direct volunteer work

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*: 61.

¹⁹⁴ Slater, "Revisiting typologies of membership schemes in museums and galleries," 379 and 93.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 393–94.

¹⁹⁶ Statskontoret, *I samhällets intresse? En samhällsekonomisk studie av den ideella sektorn*. 32–33.

¹⁹⁷ "Study on Volunteering in the European Union. Country report Sweden," (2011), 4.

to the museums' activities.¹⁹⁸ This study aims to examine many different types of cultural heritage sites. The study includes museums reported to have anything from 1,500 to 1.4 million annual visitors. Similarly, the number of staff varies greatly, from just one person, or persons hired as needed, to about 220 employees. In addition, it includes many small cultural heritage sites that are sometimes run strictly by volunteers and where the numbers of visitors also varies a great deal.

However, in order to make this report manageable, it has been divided into three parts. The first part is about mapping volunteer work in cultural heritage institutions throughout Sweden. To gain an overview we studied the websites of all national museums and regional museums, so as to get an idea of whether or not they have volunteers or friendship organisations. This review also showed what information the volunteers or friendship organisations had access to. There is also information about the activities offered to volunteers or members in friendship organisations. A survey was also sent out to 200 museums throughout Sweden. The selection was made by sending the survey to all members of the Association of Swedish Museums. The museums included are national, regional, municipal museums, as well as museums operated in other forms. Of the 200 surveys sent out, we received 69 answers, giving a response frequency of 35 per cent.

The other part of the study concerns conducting a more in-depth study in a smaller area. The same survey that was sent to all museums throughout Sweden was therefore sent to a number of destinations, small museums and cultural heritage sites in a geographically limited area, namely Jämtland County. This area was chosen because it is home to some larger museums and destinations, and because there are also many cultural heritage sites situated there. There is a lively local history movement there, which, in some cases, is involved in cultural heritage sites. As such, the number of sites examined is representative for that which this research project intends to study. In Jämtland the survey was sent to 40 museums, archives and historical destinations. Among them are both large institutions, with a majority of hired staff, such as Jamtli (the regional museum) or the regional archives, but also smaller destinations and estate museums such as Lapplia's local museum or the railroad museum association. Our selection was made by sending the survey to the members of two networks: The forum for industrial history and the network of cultural tourism. In addition, the survey was sent to organi-

¹⁹⁸ Anna Hansen, "Are volunteers unpaid staff or a group of learners?," in *Heritage, Regional Development and Social Cohesion*, ed. Peter Kearns, Sofia Kling, and Christina Wistman, *Fornvårdaren* (Östersund: Jamtli Forlag, 2011), 65–66.

sations such as Jämtland County's Art Association and The regional association of local history societies. The survey was also sent to 90 community centres or local history societies. Of the 130 surveys that were sent out locally, 25 were returned. This amounts to a very low response rate of 19 per cent. The reason for this low response rate could be that many community centres did not consider themselves to have any volunteers, which was evident in the responses from those who returned the survey. This response is discussed in further detail later on. Together with the 69 survey responses from the rest of Sweden, we received a total of 94 completed surveys, on which this study is based. Even if the response rate was low, the number of survey answers is sufficient to draw some conclusions as to how the work with volunteers operates. All cultural heritage sites had been offered the possibility of being anonymous when their answers were published, which is why there sometimes is a lack of references.

In the third part of the study, the surveys are supplemented with interviews to get more in depth information and to achieve greater insight into volunteer work and the ways in which this can be done. The interviews were conducted with union representatives and volunteers. The trade unions represented are Kommunal, Vision and DIK. The volunteers interviewed are active in Jamtli Gynare, Alsen community centre, and Ytterån community centre. Additionally, interviews were conducted with the directors of Fjällmuseet in Funäsdalen and Optand Teknikland, as well as with the person responsible for coordinating the volunteers' work at Jamtli. The selection of those interviewed was made with the intention to get more in-depth information about volunteers from different perspectives. Through this selection, we interacted with the professionals, the volunteers themselves, and the cultural heritage sites. As the majority of the interviewees are active in Jamtli, this site serves as an example which is studied in more detail than other cultural heritage institutions.

Understanding of the concepts volunteer and friendship association

To the question of whether or not they had volunteers, 31 of the 69 cultural heritage institutions that completed the survey at national level replied that they did work with volunteers. This, however, is not an entirely reliable answer. As the concept of a "volunteer" is not so commonly understood in Sweden, we included a definition of what we mean by a "volunteer" in the survey. "Volunteers" were defined as "people who voluntarily and without remuneration work for an organisation". While this may seem like a simple and obvious explanation, it is evident that the concept of volunteer is not entirely uncomplicated and that it is open to many different interpretations. In the survey many community centres or local history societies responded

that they organised activities, but that they neither have personnel nor volunteers. A community centre stated, for instance, that they have 270 visitors to their events, but zero volunteers. Another organisation had 1000 visitors and zero volunteers, despite the fact that they serve coffee, offer tours and conduct seminars. None of these organisations have hired staff. Responses such as these make clear that those who work as volunteers in community centres do not always view themselves as volunteers.

A similar uncertainty exists when it comes to friendship associations. Through the survey conducted cultural heritage sites were asked whether they have volunteers and whether they have friendship associations. For many of these sites the volunteers are those who are members of the friendship association, while others have one or the other or neither. At times, it is still unclear who actually is a volunteer.

Several museums who answered that they do not have volunteers state that they have a friendship association that carries out certain jobs. These jobs can include gardening,¹⁹⁹ acting as hosts at programme activities or exhibitions,²⁰⁰ arranging excursions or programme activities²⁰¹ or taking responsibility / helping with the museum's yearbook.²⁰² These jobs are very much like those that volunteers do²⁰³ and must be defined as volunteer work based on the criteria that they take place voluntarily and without remuneration. In those cases where the friendship association's members perform work that benefits the museum they should be considered volunteers, even if they are organised in a separate association that is more or less closely connected to the museum. In Slater's terms, they are volunteers in "social clubs" or in "public members' schemes". Many other museums reasoned in similar ways when they defined whether or not they had volunteers. When questioned as to whether they had volunteers, many museums responded that they had friendship association members.²⁰⁴ What a volunteer is, from a museum's perspective, is therefore not entirely simple, even though it may seem easy, at first glance, to determine who is a volunteer.

Is this confusion a symptom of an attitude towards volunteers? Is having volunteers viewed as something negative – is that why they are rather classified as a friendship association that lends a hand? There are clear signs that many cultural heritage sites do have a negative view of volunteers. One

¹⁹⁹ Åjtte svenskt fjäll- och samemuseum.

²⁰⁰ e.g. Musik- och teatermuseum.

²⁰¹ Göteborgs naturhistoriska museum, Västärvet.

²⁰² Göteborgs naturhistoriska museum, Västärvet, Armémuseum.

²⁰³ See chapter 9.

²⁰⁴ e.g. Nationalmuseum, Jamtli, Göteborgs stadsmuseum.

museum states that whilst they have no volunteers, they do have a friendship association that mans the post which sells tickets to a small point of interest three times a year. In considering whether they would have volunteers, this museum answered in the following way:

It is a question for trade unions, and why exactly should culture be run by volunteers? Today, we already employ, via wage contributions, multitudes of people from the labour market who can rarely be used in the outward-oriented work. And who is it, anyway, we think should work without pay? In England and the United States, it is well-to-do people with other sources of income, and there are not as many people like that in Sweden, and those who exists are likely not suitable. One of the museums' objectives is to reach out to all those who might not normally visit a museum, and it is far from certain that wealthy men and women are the best people to tackle difficult students from problem areas. The same applies to pensioners. We should add, that today there are very few jobs at museums that do not require an education. All those who are expected to carry out relevant work, therefore, require a great deal of instruction – and there is generally little time for that.

This is an expression of a very negative view of volunteers – that there are not that many who are able to volunteer and that those who are able are not suitable. The response, which creates a picture of how this museum views volunteer activities, does not tally exactly with the results of various studies. Previous research, for instance, has shown that most people who get involved as volunteers are actually gainfully employed²⁰⁵ – a fact which contradicts the museum's claim that it is only the wealthy who have nothing better to do than get involved as volunteers.

The response quoted also points out a number of other important aspects, like the fact that using volunteers requires both time and dedication on the part of the museum. The respondent also refers to professionalization when he/she makes the point that there are few tasks that non-professionals can manage, which would indicate that they defend the position of professionals in the workplace. By emphasizing the value of professionals' knowledge and skills, one stresses the legitimacy of those professions.

This "professional" reasoning is also an example of the fact that there is an attitude in Sweden which results in volunteer work not being viewed

²⁰⁵ Socialstyrelsen, *Genus och civilt samhälle*. 20–21.

in a very positive light. People are aware of their rights as employees, and the unions' demands for wages is strong. At the same time, there is a lot of volunteer work in Sweden, often in the form association/club life, which is also strong. An association working for and keeping open a local community centre or another place of interest is in no way controversial. It is a type of activity that we are used to. However, if a museum runs the same local community centre with the help of volunteers, this activity is not at all viewed in the same way. One way for museums with paid staff to deal with this problem is to create a friendship society with which to carry out volunteer work. In Alix Slater's terms this preference would be described as it being better to have a friendship society that serves as a public members' scheme and which is run by both intra- and extra-beneficial motives, than it is to have an integrated membership scheme. According to Slater,²⁰⁶ this definition naturally means that the museums do not use volunteers optimally, as they cannot be controlled to work only with the activities that the museum needs the most. However, this manner of organising activities is more in line with Swedish traditions and is therefore easier to accept.

If we look at how friendship associations are organised, it is also clear that most are independent associations with weak bonds to the museum. In some cases, the friendship society is one of the principals for the museum, while in others, the museum director is co-opted onto the board of the society. It appears that friendship societies are driven primarily by intra-benefit and are thus not so strongly involved in the museum's plans and activities. Even if some of them do things that are beneficial for the museum and fit in well with the museum's activities, the activities are not controlled by the museum's strategy, but rather by the association's own interests. This is evident when you look at their activities. For example, the friendship society associated with Akvariet Maritime Museum organises a Christmas market inside and outside the museum, whilst the friendship society linked to Eksjö museum has worked on putting together a film made of old films from the 1930–1960s. These examples, like several others, have no direct connection to the museum's strategy or activity, but are independent initiatives that the volunteers of the friendship society have taken upon themselves to create because they enjoy doing so and it benefits them.

The museums often seem to take care of their friendship associations. Although they are independent associations, they do require some effort on the part of the museums. Many museums offer discounts in the museum

²⁰⁶ Slater, 2007. Slater, "Revisiting typologies of membership schemes in museums and galleries."

shop,²⁰⁷ they invite members to exhibition previews or lectures,²⁰⁸ they offer free entry to the museum,²⁰⁹ and they provide facilities for the meetings and arrangements of the friendship society.²¹⁰ Sometimes they even arrange for travel or outings for the friendship society.²¹¹ Having a friendship society is thus not entirely effortless for the museum. Many museums market their friendship associations on their websites by listing all the benefits one gets as a member.²¹² For the most part, friendship societies that stress these benefits are driven by intra-benefit. In a number of friendship societies, however, there is parallel work driven by extra-benefit in the form of volunteers who help the museum in different ways. Although volunteers in the friendship society do things for the museum, this arrangement requires a counter effort in the form of various benefits.

The definition of what a volunteer is appears, in principle, very simple, but it is not so simple in practice to determine whether one has volunteers or not. Instead, sometimes there are volunteers "on the quiet". There is no clear indication as to why a museum will have a friendship society or volunteers. Naturally, there is a difference between community centres and cultural heritage institutions, in that community centres almost never have paid personnel and, in some cases, community centres are friendship societies.²¹³ By dividing the cultural heritage institutions into groups according to staff size, we get the following pattern:

Number of staff	Average number of volunteers
1–20	13,5
21–40	10,1
41–60	12,5
61<	16,8

Table 1: Number of employees and volunteers at cultural heritage sites. Source: survey

This means that it is not necessarily the size of the cultural heritage institution that determines whether it has volunteers or how many it has. It may be that smaller cultural heritage institutions are more likely to have volunteers based on the fact that there are more volunteers in relation to

²⁰⁷ e.g. Musik- och teatermuseet.

²⁰⁸ e.g. Spårvägmuseet.

²⁰⁹ e.g. Kristinehamns konstmuseum.

²¹⁰ e.g. Postmuseum.

²¹¹ e.g. Hallands konstmuseum.

²¹² e.g. Moderna Museets Vänner or Medelhavsmuseets Vänner.

²¹³ Jamtlis Gynnare.

employees in such organisations. Whilst there are examples of organisations with three employees and 100 volunteers (Optand teknikland), there are also organisations with 100 employees and 15 volunteers (Malmö museums), as well as cultural heritage institutions with two employees without volunteers, and those with 110 employees and no volunteers; in other words, the situation varies greatly from place to place.

Volunteer work

The volunteers perform a number of different tasks, but, by and large, the tasks are similar within similar organisations. At local community centres, there are very similar tasks, namely building maintenance, cleaning and lawn mowing, combined with serving coffee and often waffles. Although it is rarely specified many volunteers are likely to also take care of guided tours of the local community centres and the objects collected there.

When it comes to the tasks that volunteers carry out at cultural heritage institutions, they can be divided into five categories. I have chosen to categorise the tasks into service, handicraft, collection/objects, events and other. This is because volunteers have jobs that have to do with greeting visitors (service) and the public activities, but also because there are a number of people working “behind the scenes” (collections/objects). Some cultural heritage institutions only make use of volunteers for events, or it is there that their main function lies. Several museums have special focus areas, which means that professionals in a certain profession or with certain handicraft skills are those who work as volunteers. Table 2 provides an overview of jobs that volunteers may have based on the survey results.

Table 2 indicates that the volunteers’ jobs cover a wide range. Together, they take care of a large part of the work at museums. In some cases, the volunteers are even referred to as “museum educators”. In many cases, however, it means that volunteers can have skills that the museum staff does not, and their contribution is another type of communication in that they can demonstrate certain professions or handicrafts.

The community centre of Alsen also mentions many problems tied to volunteer work. It is of great importance to know what skills can be found within the association. For the work to be effective, one cannot ask that the work be carried out by just anyone. Interest and knowledge are a requirement, but they believe “it is useless that a non-carpenter carry out a carpenter’s job”; one has to be clear about what different people can do. It is also important to realise that those who work as volunteers do so of their own free will, because they want to, but also that they contribute the skills that the cultural heritage site needs.

Service	Handicraft	Collections/objects	Events	Other
Guards at the exhibitions, “host”	Restoration of aircraft	Photo identification	Arrange theme evenings	Board work
Cleaning aircraft, tidying outside area, picking up trash	Setting up new wood fence and stonewalls	Transport material and rig	Coffee-making for events	Planning and building exhibitions
Tending shop and café/baking bread and serving coffee	Cultivation and care of crops (harvest and grind)	Project management for picture registration	Help with outings	Documentation
Maintenance and operation of model railroad	Prepare, collect material and boil own tar	Renovation and maintenance of museum, buildings and objects	Own events such as model train day	Research coordination
Presentation of amateur radio station	Prepare and burn own stack for sale of charcoal	Object registration	Operate older veteran busses for special events	Book publication
Museum educators, e.g. Gardeners man allotment garden cottages, a group from the consumer association acts as ice men/ external teachers or as cooperative assistance in a cooperative store	Rope-making	Cleaning and packing of objects to be moved to other storage	On programme days such as Christmas market, harvest festivals, they mainly help keep the museum environments open and report on them	Copying of older documents
Help with receptions, inaugurations and private viewings, information to the public	Grafting of fruit trees, gardening, removing brush		Work at large events, e.g. parking attendant, information, ticket sales	Information basis for exhibits
Assist our international artists before and during their work.	Renovate and maintain association’s vehicles from 1920s–30s			Editing work for museum’s annual publication
Diffusing information (marketing)	Demonstrating a profession or craft			Produce lottery prizes and sell lottery tickets
Replacing old information signs	Work with our textiles			IT support
Making meatballs, baking flatbread				Surveys
Stuffing envelopes				Care of ancient remains
Stamp-selling				

Table 2. Jobs that volunteers perform at cultural heritage institutions. Source: survey study

Who are the volunteers?

We have already defined the terms volunteer and volunteer work. The question is what kind of people are behind the term. Previous research concerning volunteers in Sweden has shown that those involved (in all sectors) are men to a large degree, but that the share of women is growing. It is also clear that more highly educated people are involved, as are those with higher incomes and living in rural areas or in smaller towns.²¹⁴ It also appears that the unemployed and immigrants are also less involved than other groups in association activities.²¹⁵ It is primarily those who are gainfully employed who are also involved in volunteer work and, therefore, one cannot draw the conclusion that countries where more people are not gainfully employed have a higher number of volunteers, because they have the time or resources to get involved. One example is Germany, where many women are not gainfully employed, but where participation in volunteer work is low compared to elsewhere in Europe.²¹⁶

Age

One study from the EU shows that the largest group of volunteers in Sweden is the age group 30–44.²¹⁷ Both in Europe and in other parts of the world, however, there is lively discussion about the new type of pensioners who are vibrant and youthful and who are searching an active lifestyle.²¹⁸ There is a clear goal in the EU to encourage the elderly to participate in volunteer work.²¹⁹ People in this age group also make significant contributions to society through their work as volunteers in different kinds of associations.²²⁰ Volunteer work is often seen as an important element in preventing or stopping social exclusion, and many reports have also shown the important role of culture for health, especially in the elderly.²²¹ The demographic develop-

²¹⁴ Stark and Hamrén, *Frivilligarbetets kön kvinnor, män och frivilligt arbete. En översikt*. 25–26; “Study on Volunteering in the European Union. Country report Sweden,” 5.

²¹⁵ Wijkström, *Svenskt organisationsliv – framväxten av en ideell sektor*. 15; “Study on Volunteering in the European Union. Country report Sweden,” 5.

²¹⁶ Socialstyrelsen, *Genus och civilt samhälle*. 20–21.

²¹⁷ “Study on Volunteering in the European Union. Country report Sweden,” 3.

²¹⁸ Hansen, “Are volunteers unpaid staff or a group of learners?,” 67–68.

²¹⁹ Ehlers, Naegelé, and Reichert, *Volunteering by older people in the EU*. 5.

²²⁰ Tom Schuller and David Watson, *Learning Through Life. Inquiry into the Future of Lifelong Learning* (Leicester: NIACE, 2009). 97.

²²¹ Anna Goulding, “Lifelong Learning for people aged 64+ within the contemporary art gallery context,” *Educational Gerontology* 38, no. 4 (2012); Henrik Zipsane, “Heritage learning in service for the memories and life quality of senior citizens,” *International Journal of Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning* 3, no. 2 (2011).



The volunteers at Bunge museum are mainly older men. In this picture Walter Söderström, Ylva Johansson and Stig Glansholm guard the tar pit which burns day and night in order to produce tar. Photo: Maj-Gun Blomberg, Bungemuseet.

ment we are now facing, means that the elderly population (65–79) will increase dramatically over the years to come. Many researchers have focused on this age group and what it is that makes them decide to volunteer.²²² They have a lot of experience and knowledge and are often deeply engaged in the organisation they work for. The situation is the same even in other countries like the United States, where there will also be large groups soon retiring, which means there will be many people with time who are looking for meaningful and quality activities.²²³ The volunteer work can prove im-

²²² Justin Davis Smith and Pat Gay, *Active ageing in active communities. Volunteering and the Transition to Retirement* (York, UK: Institute for Volunteering Research, 2005); *Volunteering by older people in the EU*.

²²³ Christopher Johnson et al., *50+ volunteering: Working for stronger communities* (Washington, DC: Points of Light Foundation, 2004); John Foster-Bey, Robert Grimm, and Nathan Dietz, *Keeping Baby boomers volunteering. A Research Brief on Volunteer Retention and Turnover* (Washington, DC: Corporation for National and Community Service, Office of Research and Policy Development, 2007); Kathy Burnes and Judith G. Gonyea, “Expanding the Boundaries of corporate volunteerism: Retirees as a valuable resource,” (Boston, MA: The Center for Corporate Citizenship at Boston College and Volunteers of America, 2005).

portant in helping them stay a part of society and leading an active life.²²⁴ It is no surprise, therefore, that there are many active elderly individuals who participate as volunteers.

Studies done earlier say nothing about how age and the type of activity one gets involved in relate to each other.²²⁵ Among cultural heritage sites, it is clear that the majority of volunteers are elderly. Most of those who answered the survey state that their volunteers are retirees or that they are over 50, although many say that the burden is born mostly by those between 40 and 70. Still, there are those museums that have younger volunteers. These are exceptions, but they are interesting because they concern museums that are very different in nature. It is Uppsala art museum, which mainly uses students as volunteers; the military museum in Boden, which has volunteers between 30 and 80; Vallby open air museum and Göteborg's municipal museum, which both has pensioners, but also teens and twenty-something volunteers. Thus, it does not seem to be the type of museum that determines whether it is younger or older people who become volunteers. Therefore, we should take a closer look at the activities that the volunteers participate in and how often they participate. Uppsala art museum, for instance, uses only volunteers in connection with an international art festival that is organised every other year. Here, they have no on-going work, and the volunteers do not commit for a longer period, but just for a specific activity. Vallby open air museum works with volunteers as needed and for programme days, and the younger volunteers are often recruited among teens who work summers at the museum. Göteborg municipal museum works with sponsors of ancient monuments. The volunteers help to care for the ancient monuments by removing bushes and replacing information signs. Their work is clearly tied to a particular monument for which they are responsible. The military museum in Boden has volunteers who are or once were tied to the garrison, and it is their military background that is important when they help produce documentation or show military vehicles. Thus, it is very specific work or activity that is offered at the cultural heritage sites that attracts volunteers of various ages.

From the interview, too, it is clear that it is mainly retirees who work as volunteers in the cultural heritage sector. At the community centres, however, the board members have a lower average age than those who volunteer in the association. In Ytterån's community centre, the age range of those on

²²⁴ Mental health foundation, "An Evidence Review of the impact of participatory arts on older people"; Ehlers, Naegele, and Reichert, *Volunteering by older people in the EU*.

²²⁵ "Study on Volunteering in the European Union. Country report Sweden," 2011, 3.

the board is 35–60. Then there are those who are still active between ages 65–70 who work for the sake of a good cause. In Alsen's community centre, members are between age 30–85. Even in Jamtlis Gynnare, it is mainly retirees who are members and who work for free, and even new members are pensioners. Similarly, Fjällmuseet reports that its volunteers are mainly elderly.

Gender

Previous research has shown that for volunteer work in general, men are more likely to volunteer than women. In Sweden it is approximately 54 per cent of men and 43 per cent of women (16–74) who are involved in some kind of volunteer work.²²⁶ This trend appears to be the same among museums. As mentioned earlier, 31 of 69 museums said they work with volunteers. Fifty per cent of these have mainly male volunteers, while 30 per cent mainly have women volunteers, and 13 have an equal amount of men and women.²²⁷ Among community centres, things are different. The majority of community centres have an equal number of men and women volunteers. Those with an imbalance between the sexes all have a majority of women volunteers. This difference could be explained by the community centres' and museums' orientation and activity.

There is a clear tendency for men and women to volunteer for different kinds of activities. Those museums where there is a majority of women are largely art museums. In this group we find Uppsala Art Museum, the Nordic Watercolour Museum and the National Museum, but also Jamtlis Gynnare and the Postal Museum. Of those volunteer activities where men make up the majority we find mostly technical and military museums, such as Optand Teknikland, the Military Museum in Boden, the Air Force Museum and the State Maritime Museum. There are also museums where there is an equal number of men and women volunteers. These include Göteborg Municipal Museum and the Nordic Museum, i.e. museums with a more general cultural orientation, even though many cultural museums are dominated by one gender or the other among volunteers.

The explanation why some activities attract more men than women can be found in the work that the volunteers have. At museums, there is a variety of different tasks, as we saw earlier. At cultural heritage sites, where there are more men than women who are active, volunteers often work with traditionally male-dominated tasks, such as grilling woodcutter's pancakes, stacking

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ The other 7 per cent did not answer the question.



In some places traditional gender roles are defied and showing the craft is deemed as the important part. At a crafts day at Bunge museum Olle Söderdahl spins flax with a visitor. Photo: Maj-Gun Blomberg, Bungemuseet.

coal or operating and renovating older vehicles. Where there is a majority of women who are volunteers, many of the tasks are of the “paperwork” type, such as sending out correspondence or transcribing older documents. Where you find more of a balance between the sexes, there also appears to be more tasks to choose from. When there are many tasks, however, it is difficult to say who does which tasks.

When it comes to community centres, the activities seem rather similar in most respects. It mostly involves building maintenance, cleaning and lawn-mowing, combined with serving coffee and often waffles. Many also serve as guides. Of the interviews with those who work in community centres, it appears that the volunteer work is dominated by women. When it comes to the division of tasks, men are more interested in building, drainage, clearing and cleaning, while women work more with design, painting, planting and serving. When it comes to running a summer café, it is still women aged 40–50 who are dominant.

This division of labour could have to do with the fact that many museums and community centres try to recreate the past, which is why it is historical gender roles that dominate. Men build and carry out the heavy manual labour, while women take care of tasks tied to the home. In Jamtli’s



At the regional archives in Östersund a majority of the volunteers are women. Here is Maud Torning from the Jämtland county genealogical society helping a new genealogist. Photo: Christina Agdeler, ÖLA.

friendship society, the aim is to show how people once lived and their work, therefore, is gender-dependent; they know that they are working based on old gender roles and talk about the genders. More women want to be involved in grilling woodcutter’s pancakes, but it is a man’s job and, therefore, it would not be historically accurate for women to do the work. Regardless of gender, the volunteers share the common goal that the end result should be good. At Ytterån’s community centre, they believe that what matters is the result of the work even if men and women are clearly oriented towards different tasks. The women are more focused on decoration such as plants, while men are more likely to do maintenance work such as making fencing and cleaning gutters.

Social background and recruitment of new volunteers

Perhaps the most common method for recruiting volunteers for the cultural heritage sites, or for the friendship societies, is through those who are already members. Those who are active bring new people with them or talk about it with people they know, who then become involved. It can also be people who come in contact with the volunteers at the museum while participating in an activity who can be convinced to become new volunteers. In that way,

the volunteers play a very important role as marketing representative for their own activities. Recruiting volunteers in this way, however, has an effect on the social diffusion. The surveys point to the importance of the social networks in fostering volunteer engagement. Naturally, a certain social homogeneity arises as a result, where volunteers at a specific cultural heritage site tend to share similar backgrounds.

There are some museums that employ other methods of recruitment. Some museums look for new volunteers among young people who work summers at the museum,²²⁸ another museum issues a magazine and has a chat page,²²⁹ a third one has an information folder that can be found in different places throughout the museum,²³⁰ but there are very few organised efforts to recruit new volunteers. It seems as though museums and friendship societies do not invest a lot of energy in marketing their volunteer activities, but mainly rely on those already active to recruit others.

Members of community centres all have in common that they are tied to the local community. This means that social diffusion can be somewhat greater in these associations, and members often differ in terms of educational background and experience. Both academics and factory workers are represented, which is useful in that different skills are often needed in the work of community centres. As for Jamtlis Gynnare, which is a community centre in a town, and Jamtlis friendship society, many have an academic background; they are, for instance, retired teachers, management from various companies and craftsmen. To facilitate the work of volunteers, in Ytterån's community centre they are offered courses in, for example, board work and cultural work, so they do not have to have experience in these areas from the day they get involved as a volunteer. It is pointed out that it is difficult to recruit new volunteers, and it is also difficult to get people to participate in the courses offered. That fact that training is offered indicates an acknowledgement that volunteers can come from different social contexts and an attempt to try and facilitate participation for all.

Common to all the cultural heritage sites is that anyone who wants to participate is welcome. In other countries, other methods are used when recruiting volunteers. For example, the British Association of Friends of Museums recommends having an application form and conducting an interview before accepting a volunteer, in order to get to know the volunteer and to find out whether they have any special needs and whether they are suitable for the work. They also recommend requesting certification from

²²⁸ Vallby friluftsmuseum.

²²⁹ Sveriges järnvägs museum.

²³⁰ Jamtli.

the police that the volunteer has no criminal record, especially if the volunteer is to work with children.²³¹ In Sweden, it is uncommon to have such a recruitment process and it is also uncommon to have introduction training. Naturally, this has both advantages and disadvantages. A selection process always contributes to a degree of quality control (from the organisations' perspective) and can also give a higher status in that there is a certain exclusivity. On the other hand, the excluding element that a selection procedure entails can also have a deterring effect. A number of people could fear being rejected. Selection can also lead to social standardisation among volunteers if one is not very aware of this risk in selection.

An important function for the volunteer work is preventing or stopping social exclusion. This means that it is important to use other methods to reach volunteers than through social networks. The socially excluded are, by definition, without such networks and therefore lack contacts who can spread information about the possibilities to them. Therefore, it is especially important to have different types of marketing of volunteer activities to reach them.²³² If you have a systematic selection process for recruitment, it can also be seen as more open and equitable, as all volunteers are judged on the same criteria and not based on their social contacts.

The social network can lead one to volunteer activities, but volunteer activities can also lead to new social contacts. Previous studies have shown that volunteer work can be beneficial for the unemployed, because unemployment can lead to social isolation and mental stress, which can be stopped through volunteer work.²³³ Volunteers acquire new skills that can bring them closer to the labour market. Most of all, it is the training in social and personal skills that are important for employers, such as teamwork, communicating and meeting deadlines. Volunteer work also shows that the volunteer is capable and willing to work. Through the new social networks that the volunteers can gain, there is also the possibility of learning about job openings.²³⁴ Both volunteers and employers believe that volunteer work can lead to work, even if a previous study points out that not much research has been done on this matter yet.²³⁵

²³¹ Peter Walton, *The Handbook for Heritage Volunteer Managers and Administrators* (British Association of Friends of Museums, 2009), 10–12.

²³² Ehlers, Naegele, and Reichert, *Volunteering by older people in the EU*, 21.

²³³ Cristina Da Milano, Kristen Gibbs, and Sani Margherita, eds., *Volunteers in Museums and Cultural Heritage. A European Handbook* (Ljubljana: Slovenian Museum Association, 2009), 66.

²³⁴ Matthew Hill, "Volunteering and employment. What is the link for unemployed volunteers? Research bulletin from the institute for volunteering research," (2009), 3.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

Generally, one can say that volunteers at Swedish cultural heritage sites are often over 50 and that they were introduced to the activity through friends and acquaintances. They perform a range of different tasks, often determined by gender. Both men and women are involved. To break this pattern, new methods must be used for recruitment and other types of work should be offered, preferably part-time, so one does not have to commit to a long-term project.

Does volunteer work have repressive effects?

The survey suggests in a number of replies that there is concern among the museums and among personnel for repressive effects. There is a clear difference of opinions regarding the dangers of volunteers between those museums who have volunteers and those who do not. Those who do *not* work with volunteers express misgivings such as "real services are replaced by volunteer work, which, in turn, becomes a question of class – for who can afford to work without pay?"²³⁶, or that "they can ruin the chances for the professionally trained to get work"²³⁷. This type of concern is primarily based on a fear that volunteers will take over work from hired staff, but also a fear that the staff's skill is not appreciated. An institution that has volunteers expresses that the education officers experience that "their profession is not respected enough when management considers replacing their work with volunteers".²³⁸ This would indicate that there indeed are a number of repressive effects. This case, and other comments, is about volunteers getting work that is the same as staff's or very similar tasks even though they do not have the proper training. This can relate, in part, to repressive effects and, in part, to a lack of respect or appreciation for the staff's profession and skill. Regardless whether it is the one thing or the other, it causes unrest and can also contribute to a bad work environment and discomfort. It appears important, therefore, to avoid repressive effects or the sense of not being valued, which could be avoided by giving volunteers different tasks than hired staff and they should not have tasks that are normally carried out by persons with professional training. The latter is very important, as many of the professions in museums are relatively young, which means that the specific skill that a education officer or other museum worker has is disregarded. This is also expressed by several museums that have chosen not to have volunteers. For instance, one museum states that "we believe that the work at a museum is based on knowledge and

²³⁶ Hallands kulturhistoriska museum.

²³⁷ Västerbottens museum.

²³⁸ Skansen.

skill, where many have a solid education and therefore should be paid for their work".²³⁹ This can be seen as a battle for positions that has to do with showing appreciation for the professionalism of staff and emphasizing that they have other knowledge and skills than do volunteers.

Thus, personnel do experience certain repressive effects, in particular at those museums that do *not* actually have volunteers. The unrest and the threat they see to their position is not real, in the sense that volunteers actually plan to take over, but is expressed by those who do not work with volunteers themselves as something that could happen if they had worked with volunteers. There is thus great scepticism and opposition to start working with volunteers.

Among those museums that have volunteers, most state that the cooperation between staff and volunteers works well. There is not at all the same type of comments that express strong concern about their own position. Often, it is stated that personnel act as "mentors",²⁴⁰ "coaches",²⁴¹ "supervisors"²⁴² or similar. What many others also stress is that it is the paid staff who are the professionals and that it is clear what tasks the volunteers have and which the staff have. The fact that there are clear boundaries between the volunteers' and the professionals' work is deemed very important. One museum points out that the volunteers have "clearly delineated jobs. Their efforts are seen rather as complementary to our ordinary activities".²⁴³ Often, the responsibility has boundaries. Volunteers rarely receive supervisory functions, nor are they responsible for locks, alarms or cash registers to any significant extent.²⁴⁴

One problem that can arise, however, is that the volunteers are those with the most specialised knowledge. In many instances, the museum demonstrates a profession where the volunteer was active by displaying an object or showing how certain parts of the profession are carried out. This is true, for instance, of Sweden's railroad museum, Malmö museums, Vallby open-air museum (which has a printing house) and Uppsala historical medical museum. This can lead to a number of conflicts, and some say that it becomes a "battle of prestige". Other places, the contrary is true, and volunteers with their specialist knowledge are seen as a resource. Thus, volunteers having the

²³⁹ Vänermuseet.

²⁴⁰ Skansen.

²⁴¹ Eskilstuna stadsmuseum.

²⁴² Stiftelsen Västerviks museum.

²⁴³ Flygvapenmuseum.

²⁴⁴ For example Stiftelsen Västervik museum and Nordiska akvarellmuseet report that these are areas where volunteers have no responsibility.



At Eskilstuna museum skilled volunteers show different crafts. Here a volunteer helps with a printing experiment. Photo: Anna Hellberg.

greatest specialist knowledge can be both a problem and a resource, which perhaps depends on how you handle this and how, respectively, the volunteers' and staff's work is organised in relation to each other. A previous study of Eskilstuna museums shows that it works well for them having volunteers in their experiment workshop, which shows different industrial trades (printing, casting, forging etc.). The volunteers are former professionals who show the visitors their craft and allow them to try. Here, volunteers have an expertise and a well-defined job that gives added value, given that the experiment workshop would also work with just the museum's personnel.²⁴⁵ Even though both the volunteers and staff are professionals, it is not a battle for positions, given that the skill areas are different.

There are also examples where there are, in fact, repressive effects. One museum states that they have a friendship society with members that "work on a rolling schedule on holidays, together with the wage-earning staff. Otherwise, the museum would have to double its staff, as we cannot have people working alone".²⁴⁶ This would indicate that volunteers actually go in and do

²⁴⁵ Arbetets museum, *Museer med nya krafter. Ett pilotprojekt om frivilligarbete på museer 2002–2004*. 27–33.

²⁴⁶ Ljusnedalsbygdens museum.

"real" work and are not just there to create added value. The documentation is limited, but it seems as though cultural heritage sites that have a few members of staff and which therefore rely on volunteers, often have a mixture of professionals and volunteers to take care of tasks. These sites have not come so far in their degree of professionalism (even though the individuals are naturally as professional as others at other sites) that they experience it as a problem that volunteers and staff carry out the same work. One can look at it like a scale, where, at one end, we have smaller cultural heritage sites run mainly by volunteers, at the other, sites that only have paid staff.



Figure 2. The degree of professionalization, that is the share of paid staff, is decisive for the tension that can arise between professionals and volunteers.

In interviews with the union representatives at Jamtli it was noted that it is difficult to know which jobs are suitable for volunteers, to prevent repressive effects. Even though the individual job does not contribute to repression, it may do so over time.

The Kommunal union representative views volunteer work as positive in the sense that non-profit associations can go in and do something for culture, yet there is still a certain risk of repressive effects, which he believes is greatest among the type of work that workers organised in his trade union carry out. It is most often the practical work that volunteers at Jamtli are involved in and, therefore, they compete with staff in their professional organisation, "it is our work that is easiest to take".²⁴⁷ The Kommunal representatives see that repressive effects come about when friendship societies are allowed to go in and provide small supportive efforts, which overall could be provided by an employee. As an example, one can mention volunteer efforts that belong to the textile props area. Imagine that the playground for playing 18th century trade needs grouse and someone from Jamtlis Gynnare sews them. If the playground were completely empty, one would be forced to do something

²⁴⁷ Interview with the trade union Kommunal, Jamtli.

about it – let an employee make things. The work was permitted on the basis that no one else has the time, skill or economic resources to do these tasks. These types of practical tasks that are carried out by the friendship society lead to a difficult delineation when it comes to repression.²⁴⁸ The information that this could have been paid work is even confirmed by Jamtlis Gynnare. The time aspect is also given as a reason why the friendship society was contacted for help.²⁴⁹ Space issues is also taken up as a type of repression that every organisation has to deal with, for instance, when the volunteers have to paint a table, in order not to repress the employees and cut down on their limited work space a new space has to be found for the volunteer.²⁵⁰ To prevent problems in Jamtli's cooperation with its friendship society, there is an agreement on what jobs the volunteers can carry out and what work is reserved for staff. The agreement and work are discussed every year between the friendship society, representatives from the employee and union representatives.²⁵¹

This division of work tasks is also something that is pointed to in research on volunteers and in the advice from those who work with volunteers. For instance, the division of tasks is something that is stressed in *The Handbook for Heritage Volunteer Managers and Administrators*, issued by The British Association of Friends of Museums.²⁵² The same is pointed out in the survey responses from different museums with active volunteers or who work with their friendship society.

Hindrances in working with volunteers or being a volunteer

Given that there are several cultural heritage sites that choose not to work with volunteers, there would appear to be certain hindrances in doing so. There can also be hindrances experienced by those who work with volunteers, even if they are successful in finding a solution. This study found that there are different types of hindrances or problematic areas, where labour law hindrances, time and safety issues are very important for many.

Legal hindrances

Among those who do *not* work with volunteers, there is a strong conviction that the union resistance is strong or that it is difficult to come to an agree-

²⁴⁸ Interview with the trade union Kommunal, Jamtli.

²⁴⁹ Interview with a representative of Jamtlis Gynnare.

²⁵⁰ Interview with the trade union Vision, Jamtli.

²⁵¹ Interview with the trade union Kommunal, Jamtli.

²⁵² Walton, *The Handbook for Heritage Volunteer Managers and Administrators*. 4.

ment with the union on functional volunteer activities. Several statements from museums demonstrate this: “The professional organisations in Göteborg oppose this”²⁵³, “The union probably has an opinion, too,”²⁵⁴ “Liability issues, union issues concerning, e.g. influence etc. are other tricky issues”²⁵⁵, “Have not found a way that is in keeping with collective agreements and/or other barriers”.²⁵⁶ Whether there truly have been discussions with the union, which then said no to volunteers, or whether it is simply a guess that the union would be opposed but they have not been asked, is unclear. It is clear, however, that the union is perceived as something that renders working with volunteers more difficult. Naturally, they can also serve as an excuse if one really does not wish to work with volunteers.

Among those who work with volunteers, the perception in relation to unions is another. The air force museum says that “the union representatives at the Air Force Museum look positively on the volunteers’ current work. The volunteers contribute knowledge and energy that enriches the entire organisation. The work that the volunteers perform today does not affect the paid staff’s opportunities negatively.” At many other museums, it is not clear whether there have been any real discussions with the union on this topic, rather it seems mostly that the union has not offered any comments or views with regard to volunteer activity. The apprehensions held by those who do not work with volunteers can thus not be confirmed among the museums who actually do work with volunteers. Previous studies also show that having volunteers often works well if one discusses with the union what jobs are suitable for the volunteers and makes clear limits.²⁵⁷

In order to get the union’s views of the legislative hindrances that may exist, union representatives were asked to answer how they and their members view volunteers. DIK and Vision say that the staff members generally have a positive attitude towards friendship societies. It can depend on the individuals themselves, the tasks they perform or the added value their work contributes. If their work changed then perhaps people’s opinions of them would also change.²⁵⁸ Jamtli’s representative for DIK deems it difficult to take in volunteers within the professional categories she represents, where the union members are mostly archaeologists, building curators, education officers and

²⁵³ Sjöfartsmuseet Akvariet.

²⁵⁴ Göteborgs Naturhistoriska museum, Västarvet.

²⁵⁵ Statens historiska museum.

²⁵⁶ Röhsska museet.

²⁵⁷ Arbetets museum, *Museer med nya krafter. Ett pilotprojekt om frivilligarbete på museer 2002–2004*. 32–33 and 39.

²⁵⁸ Interview with the trade union DIK, Jamtli.

managers. It is hard to find work that can be carried out by volunteers, as such work requires specialised training. Moreover, there are many unemployed in the field, and one would rather give work to an unemployed archaeologist than to interested volunteers with no experience.²⁵⁹ For that reason, she does not currently consider recruiting volunteers as relevant.

The Kommunal representative, on the other hand, does not view volunteers from the friendship society as positively, as their work often competes with that of Kommunal's members. He also believes that those who are unaffected by such competition view things from a different perspective, perhaps because they get work done for free.²⁶⁰

Volunteer work can contribute to a kind of distinction between professional groups. Seen in a broader context, the volunteers' work covers a large number of different areas, as shown previously. If one looks, however, at individual cultural heritage sites, the volunteers often have specific tasks there, which could be perceived as though some professional categories are more threatened than others. The tasks that volunteers are allowed to carry out at a workplace can also be tied to the discussion on professionalism. While DIK's representative sees no possibility for volunteers to take over the work within the professions she represents, respect for the professions represented by Kommunal's union is not deemed to be as great. There has also been volunteer activity in DIK's areas. For instance volunteers have contributed in connection with certain documentation, but this was not extensive and was viewed as complementary to the ordinary staff's work.

It is not only the union's standards that control volunteer work. One example of how complicated it is comes from Linnéa Darell (The Liberal Party of Sweden), in a written query to Cabinet Minister Hans Karlsson, 2004. She describes an example wherein a person who worked as a volunteer in support of the functionally disabled was placed on sick leave. After being reported sick, the Swedish national insurance office considers this as a job and not as volunteer work.²⁶¹ This shows that the many rules we have in today's society to govern labour, sickness, unemployment etc. must be taken into consideration by those individuals who wish to engage in volunteer work.

In the law on unemployment insurance, non-profit work is taken up when one defines that a person cannot be considered an employer if the work is of a non-profit nature.²⁶² This, in turn, affects unemployment pro-

tection. There are many different types of legislation where non-profit work or non-profit organisations are mentioned, but it is difficult to gain a broad perspective. This applies to rules about what types of organisation can receive State subsidies, for instance those working with social work and sports organisations, women's associations, etc.; rules on non-profit association lotteries; tax rules for non-profit associations; etc. There are few laws, however, that directly address volunteers' legal and social security situation. As a result, it can be difficult both for organisations and for volunteers themselves to take a position on volunteer activity.

One way in which to get around some of the union-related obstacles involved in having volunteers is to organise the volunteers in an association, such as a friendship society. This means that it can be beneficial to have a "social club" or a "public members' scheme" rather than having an "integrated membership scheme". Even though the first two are often run by intra-benefit, this kind of organisation is in line with Swedish tradition, while the "integrated membership scheme", driven by extra-benefit and therefore clearer in its work to achieve the objectives of the cultural heritage site, is an unusual kind of organisation in Sweden. In a study regarding Värmland Museum, the union representative points out that one avoids a lot of issues by cooperating with associations instead of individuals. The volunteers are "non-profit in their involvement in the association – not in the museum. Their primary interest is the association and its activities – not the museum's. Nor do they represent the museum to the visitors, but rather their association."²⁶³ Organising volunteers in a friendship society is consequently not as controversial as linking them directly to the cultural heritage site. Having the volunteers organised in a friendship society and thus at a certain distance from the cultural heritage site does not mean that the cultural heritage site cannot have a big influence on the volunteer work and has to get involved in it. A number of cultural heritage sites have a volunteer coordinator who works hard to achieve good cooperation with the friendship society and who serves as a communication link between the museum and the friendship society. An important function can be to communicate the framework that exists for the volunteers' work, so that it does not have repressive effects. Jamtli's volunteer coordinator believes that, in its endeavours to help, the friendship society sometimes does "too much" and takes over work that it should not be doing. Continuous dialogue is therefore necessary.

²⁵⁹ Interview with the trade union DIK, Jamtli.

²⁶⁰ Interview with the trade union Kommunal, Jamtli.

²⁶¹ "Document from the Swedish Parliament: Written question 2004/05:1278."

²⁶² "Svensk författningssamling, Law (1997:238) about unemployment insurances," §34c.

²⁶³ Arbetets museum, *Museer med nya krafter. Ett pilotprojekt om frivilligarbete på museer 2002–2004*. 53.

Time

The work takes time, both for the volunteers and for the cultural heritage sites. For the museums, it is mostly an issue of managing the volunteers in the right manner. One museum that does not work with volunteers writes about the risk that “there is not enough time for adequate handling and for feedback.”²⁶⁴ Another writes that “we are too few to be able to ensure proper supervision.”²⁶⁵ A third museum explains its decision not to work with volunteers with “the knowledge that successful volunteer activity requires paid staff to manage the work. . . Considerable time resources are required to start such activities and to keep them going.”²⁶⁶ This shows that there is awareness that volunteers are not just cheap labour but that it requires a lot of work for such an operation to be successful. The objective for most is to create a quality activity that gives volunteers something in return and which contributes to the activities of the cultural heritage site. This requires much dedication and time.

A European project has studied how volunteers are handled at different workplaces and the work to create different programmes for introducing volunteers.²⁶⁷ In many countries, much work is done with recruitment and the introduction of volunteers to ensure successful cooperation for both parties. An example of this is the programme “In Touch”, which is run by the Imperial War Museum North in Manchester together with Manchester Museum. In this programme, there is a structured manner for working with volunteers. After identifying what the museums want volunteers to help with and how it will be financed, an introduction programme is put together for volunteers and marketing material created to reach out to potential volunteers. Volunteers are recruited through interviews and “try outs”. They then go through an introduction programme with two weekly meetings over a course of ten weeks. It is an extensive programme that contains information about many different parts of the museum’s activities. They are then assigned a mentor among the volunteers who have been there a little longer, who give them a little extra help in the beginning.²⁶⁸ This way of working is, of course, very resource heavy. It requires a great deal of commitment from personnel and

²⁶⁴ Regionmuseet Skåne.

²⁶⁵ Strindbergsmuseet.

²⁶⁶ Statens historiska museum.

²⁶⁷ This is described in the book by Da Milano, Gibbs, and Margherita, eds., *Volunteers in Museums and Cultural Heritage. A European Handbook*.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 68–69; “In Touch volunteer programme. An Innovative skills and training programme at The Manchester Museum and Imperial War Museum North,” Manchester, 2011.



Jamtli’s friendship organisation think it’s fun and important to pass on the knowledge of making traditional flat bread. Here a demonstration for school children. Photo: Christina Thuné, Jamtli.

much time from both staff and volunteers. I have not found any museum in Sweden that even comes close to such a method. In Sweden, it is also rare that any demands are made of volunteers as to how much work they have to contribute or how often they have to work. This is more common in other countries.²⁶⁹

If we look at volunteer work in general, volunteers spend 13–14 hours a month on volunteer work – men a few hours more than women.²⁷⁰ At the same time, it is important for volunteers to be able to manage their own time and level of involvement. Alsen’s community centre society believes that the time requirement cannot be held at the same level as ordinary paid work. The volunteer may not be able to do the work within a set timeframe, but instead when it suits him or her. Therefore, it is very important to be flexible and allow a long timeframe to get things done. Non-profit labour is strong and important to preserve, but volunteers must have room to do the work they themselves want to do. It is also important that they are shown

²⁶⁹ Davis Smith and Gay, *Active ageing in active communities. Volunteering and the Transition to Retirement*. 18–19.

²⁷⁰ “Study on Volunteering in the European Union. Country report Sweden,” 5.

appreciation.²⁷¹ This would indicate that the volunteers in the community centres are driven by intra-benefit. They first and foremost want to work with things they themselves enjoy and find important. Naturally, there is no contradiction in what they find interesting and important and what the community centre wants, but the tempo, the order of priority and the expectations can differ.

In the interview with Jamtlis Gynnare it was also pointed out that there is no use ordering people to become volunteers. It has to be by choice. All work has to be at a level where it is not a requirement and that can be difficult. All volunteers have their own lives that have to be given first priority, and this differs in different cases and determines who can volunteer their time. It is an important, and sometimes difficult, balancing act to make sure that there is no coercion if any of the volunteers should be ill or not be on the ball on the day that the work is to be carried out.²⁷²

As a volunteer, there is a risk that a lot of responsibility lies with few people. It is also common to find the same people active in different groups. The extra work means that leisure time suffers, and this can be problematic. One person who was interviewed was self-employed, which takes time in itself, and he felt that getting involved as a volunteer could lead to stress. He felt it was difficult to prioritise, as he felt a moral responsibility towards the volunteer activity, even though he could say no or walk away from his responsibilities. The board meetings are sometimes ineffective and can take three to four hours. "If you know that when you rush home to eat dinner before going to a meeting for such a long time when, in fact, you also have a lot to do before work the next day, then...". There is a risk of burnout when both your usual work and your volunteer work demand a lot from you and take so much time.²⁷³

At the same time, it can be that some volunteers want a lot to do and want responsibility. This can be fine for getting things done; yet it is a good idea that several people share the work, so that not everything collapses if the most dedicated volunteer no longer can or wants to do the work. There can sometimes arise conflicts among volunteers as to who is to carry out prestigious tasks, because people want to contribute something they are good at or because they have plenty of time. Thus, it is very individual how people regard their ideal work load.

Precisely the flexibility that volunteers demand can be problematic for

²⁷¹ Volunteer at Alsens community centre.

²⁷² Interview with representative of Jamtlis Gynnare.

²⁷³ Ytterån community centre.

cultural heritage sites. A big obstacle that many museums face is that you cannot be certain that the work you would like the volunteers to do will actually get done. "Volunteer work may not get done, volunteer efforts cannot be controlled; they require special planning", writes one museum. The same is expressed by several other museums that are afraid or have experienced that volunteers suddenly do not show up for an event or that they do not sign up for the times that they are needed the most. In order for activities with volunteers to work well, there may be a need for someone to coordinate the volunteer efforts who is a contact person and who knows the volunteers well, to ensure the necessary communication to prevent unexpected events from happening so often. Hence, it is not entirely unproblematic having volunteers organised as "social clubs", as the cultural heritage sites do not have control over the work they can contribute.

Safety

Safety issues are very important when it comes to volunteers. So important that several museums who do not work with volunteers state this is because they do not know how to handle safety for volunteers, in terms of insurance and the like.²⁷⁴ It is an "unknown in case of accident, damage or liability", says one museum.

Vision points out that the employer is responsible for the working environment even for volunteers, in the same way as for employees.²⁷⁵ They are also responsible for insuring volunteers and any damages or injuries that volunteers could cause through their work.²⁷⁶ Thus, it is a huge responsibility that lies with the employer when it takes on volunteers. Uncertainties about what responsibility one has for volunteers as an employer appears to be a major hindrance. One museum says about uncertainties about issues of liability that "we have no employer liability for them; this can be a problem for them, e.g. in case of work-related injury/rehabilitation."²⁷⁷ Other museums claim instead that their insurance covers volunteers, too, when they are working.²⁷⁸

For the cultural heritage sites, it is important to take into account what their insurance includes if they are to work with volunteers, so they get the same coverage as the employees. Several museums that have volunteers report that they offer them training. This can include training in safety issues,

²⁷⁴ Vetlanda museum.

²⁷⁵ "Vision Volontärpolicy för offentligt driven verksamhet," (2011), 7.

²⁷⁶ Arbetets museum, *Museer med nya krafter. Ett pilotprojekt om frivilligarbete på museer 2002–2004*. 33.

²⁷⁷ Köpings museum.

²⁷⁸ e.g. Skansen, Bungemuseet.

fire safety and the like.²⁷⁹ And it is a way in which to increase safety and thus the sense of security both for the cultural heritage site and for the volunteer.

One way in which to formalise the volunteers' position is through a contract. This is common in Great Britain, but only one cultural heritage site of those surveyed mentioned that they have a contract that defines rights and responsibilities.²⁸⁰ A contract helps clarify what responsibilities lay with the volunteer and which lie with the organisation.

If the volunteers are instead organised in an independent association, that the museum cooperates with, for instance in the form of a friendship society, the division of liability is different. The work they carry out in the framework of an association is done as association members and private individuals.²⁸¹ One way for the cultural heritage institutions to avoid dealing with the issue of liability, which appears unclear for many cultural heritage sites, is thus to have volunteers organised in this way.

Good examples of successful work with volunteers

There are many examples that cultural heritage sites can successfully work with volunteers. The overall impression after interviews with the union representatives at Jamtli is that there is work that can be performed by volunteers. Of the examples brought up during the interviews, it seems that the most successful one is to give volunteers work in connection with events, as these do not compete with ordinary work tasks and still give added value to the activities. It would also be positive if certain administrative work and secretarial work could be carried out by volunteers, as it is currently difficult to keep up, but preferably someone should be paid for the job, and it is stated that people should get pay for recurrent work.²⁸² It would also be nice to have more hosts at the museum, giving information to the visitors, which could be a suitable job for volunteers, as would being host at exhibitions. But this requires that they have excellent knowledge about Jamtli and are service-minded, to meet visitors' needs and wishes. With good knowledge about the activities, they could be a guide and provide better service.²⁸³ Common to jobs suitable for volunteers is that they should not compete with those of the paid staff.²⁸⁴

²⁷⁹ Sveriges järnvägmuseum, Sjöhistoriska museet, Nationalmuseum.

²⁸⁰ Vallby friluftsmuseum.

²⁸¹ Arbetets museum, *Museer med nya krafter. Ett pilotprojekt om frivilligarbete på museer 2002–2004*. 53.

²⁸² Interview with the trade union DIK, Jamtli.

²⁸³ Interview with the trade union Vision, Jamtli.

²⁸⁴ Interview with the trade union Vision, Jamtli.

One successful example of volunteer work at Jamtli is when the friendship society makes woodcutter's pancakes and bakes Swedish flatbread, which they sell to visitors at events. This provides financial resources for the association, which is then used for supportive efforts for the museum. The work gives added value and does not compete with the employees work. The friendship society does work that it finds interesting, social and which they do well, and this produces financial resources that allow the museum to hire an individual to build a bathroom, for instance. The best example of volunteer work, according to Kommunal's representative, is when it raises money that then allows the museum to hire a person to provide paid work.²⁸⁵

Precisely as this example shows, it is possible for volunteer work to generate new jobs. This is also shown by studies in Great Britain.²⁸⁶ To make this possible, however, the volunteers' work should be aimed at generating funding that can be used for this, which, in turn, dictates what type of activities they are suitable for. It is one thing to, like many community centres, take care of a cafeteria that brings in financial resources and quite another to be a host at an exhibition or work as a guide.

Community centres are driven primarily by intra-benefit, as they are not tied to any other point of interest than their own. There are also organisations that almost only have volunteers, even if Heimbygda, the umbrella organisation for Jämtland County local history associations and community centres associations, has a paid assistant clerk. Through a non-profit work force, Alsen's community centre has managed to create several effective destinations. This has required a well-functioning cooperation with the authorities in order to secure economic funding and with the village's non-profit entities to work towards the same goal. Mainly it is one driving force that is behind applications, rough drafts, fact collections and contact with the authorities. The same person also drafted the economic plan and the timetable for the project. At the site, much of the work has been carried out by volunteers. The creation of environments, paths, guided tours, café activity and parties for groups are a few examples of everything that has been done. The way in which they equipped their community centre "Backgården" is a prize example. The work began with study circles, where each group was given one house of the existing: barn, main house and guesthouse with stable. They made a drawing of each house, described how much work was needed and made proposals for the areas of use. They decided that the work should be compiled in a binder showing the results of the volunteer work. The end result was reported to personnel from the country museum and the county

²⁸⁵ Interview with the trade union Kommunal, Jamtli.

²⁸⁶ Walton, *The Handbook for Heritage Volunteer Managers and Administrators*. 5.

administrative board about what they wished to do with Backgården, and they received a grant to promote their village. They also received funding for a museum displaying the village's prehistoric time and the construction of a handicap bathroom. In its work, the community centre was able to experience political measures in the form of labour. Volunteers have also helped as assistants to craftsmen, but they have also worked on their own with a variety of jobs. Both men and women have been involved in the project. Today, the site can boast about its use as a summer café, site for handicraft exhibits, events, theatre and story-telling evenings.²⁸⁷

Ytterån's community centre, too, has success stories to tell about how the volunteers organised their work. In the summer, it runs Mus-Olle's museum. The association's board recruits one or two people to lead the work, an attendant and some schoolchildren and is responsible for training the new staff and creating a timetable. In that way, the volunteer activities create jobs, in that they can be hired to show what the volunteers work with year 'round. It is clear that the skills found on the board are reflected in the activities. The interviewee had worked on producing a schedule to structure, rationalise and create procedures that facilitate the work for personnel. The method makes the work more effective, which results in greater profitability. He also plans purchases for the cafeteria and makes sure that prices and inventory are correct. His knowledge in these areas comes from his own professional experience. Because he runs his own business in the village and can easily leave work, he is also able to help if there is something that needs attending to.

The community centre's work benefits the village both culturally and economically and keeps it alive. A village where there is life is worth visiting and worth living in. That is something the community centre and the community have understood and joined together to work in the same direction for the sake of the village. During the interview, there is a faith in the future and positivity that penetrates the volunteer work. But it is difficult to recruit more volunteers and they discuss the best way to do this. "People volunteer if they are interested".²⁸⁸

In these examples, there are both paid staff and volunteers. However, it is the volunteers who hire the staff, instead of the staff engaging the volunteers. The balance of power, thus, is different from that at cultural heritage institutions, which has permanent staff that runs the institution. The example demonstrates that power issues are important in the work with volunteers. When the volunteers have the power to define and organise the work, the

²⁸⁷ Interview with volunteer from Alsen community centre.

²⁸⁸ Interview with Volontär Ytterån.

cultural workers' professionalism is not seen as threatened. It is when the professional cultural heritage workers are the ones who have the power that discussions can arise and it is seen as controversial to have volunteers. It is thus largely the level of professionalization at the cultural heritage sites that is of significance for how the relationship between volunteers and staff develops and functions.

Another example of successful volunteer activity comes from Optand Teknikland. It is a relatively newly started museum with three employees. The joint owners are the veteran car club, the veteran aircraft association and the military museum association. These associations also contribute a significant amount of volunteers. Under the direction of the hired staff, they have helped build exhibitions, create factual documentation and show vehicles and provide activities in many different ways. One difficulty has been that the volunteers require a lot of guidance from professional employees to be able to create exhibitions of a high standard and which are in keeping with the museum's visions and goals. At the same time, demands made of the volunteers cannot be too high. On the other hand, they are proud of their museum and eager to show their work in a good way, which has meant that they have been able to recruit many people. The exhibits have been very successful and would never have come about had it not been for the work of the volunteers. In this way, the cooperation with the volunteers is very successful. They contribute much work and enthusiasm, but they cannot replace the professionals, who raise the quality and therefore play a clear role in relationship to the volunteers.

Does volunteer work add value?

One expectation of both the cultural heritage institutions and of the union is that the volunteers' work should create added value. They should do work that would not be done by the regular staff, to give visitors a better experience. The question then is this: where is the added value? What kind of added value is created for the volunteer him-/herself, for the organisation and for visitors?

Added value for the volunteer

It is been suggested many times that is good for the volunteers themselves to be volunteers.²⁸⁹ This study, too, finds that volunteers gain value from their work. Several cultural heritage sites report that the volunteers get some sort

²⁸⁹ See e.g. "Nationell rapport avseende Sveriges arbete för att nå Europeiska unionens gemensamma mål för volontärverksamhet," 15.

of training for their work. This could be training in something specific they are to work on, such as operating a steam engine,²⁹⁰ review of an exhibition they are to be a guide for,²⁹¹ guide training²⁹² or safety training of different kinds.²⁹³ There is a leaning aspect to being a volunteer. The museum has to provide resources for the volunteers if they are to do their work and at the same time learn new skills. The learning aspect is something previous research discussed quite a lot.²⁹⁴ In Great Britain, many volunteers report that they became volunteers to gain qualifications, i.e. become employable. If you have been on sick leave or unemployed for a long time, volunteerism can give you relevant new skills and knowledge that makes you more employable.²⁹⁵

Museums can provide better opportunities to develop the learning aspects of volunteerism than other organisations can. Museums and other cultural heritage sites are organisations that generally have as their goal to educate, which have personnel who can share knowledge and which therefore have great potential for volunteers.²⁹⁶ Learning often takes place at many different levels. You gain new skills and knowledge, you also practice your social skills and you learn to teach.²⁹⁷ Even if volunteers often have many different reasons to be volunteers, like wanting to help an organisation or other people or for the social aspect, learning is often mentioned as a reason for becoming a volunteer.²⁹⁸ Many museums are aware of the importance of the learning aspect for volunteers and therefore arrange that type of activity. This can involve seminars, courses or outings to interesting places.²⁹⁹ Even the volunteers themselves experience that they learn a lot by being a volunteer, both facts, skills and social interaction through interaction with other people.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁰ Eskilstuna stadsmuseum.

²⁹¹ Optand teknikland, Nordiska akvarellmuseet.

²⁹² Uppsala medicinhistoriska museum.

²⁹³ Sveriges järnvägs museum, Sjöhistoriska museet, nationalmuseum.

²⁹⁴ See e.g. Hansen, "Are volunteers unpaid staff or a group of learners?"

²⁹⁵ Da Milano, Gibbs, and Margherita, eds., *Volunteers in Museums and Cultural Heritage. A European Handbook*, 66.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 24.

²⁹⁷ Per Löfstrand and Kerstin Wallin, "Det ideella kulturarvsarbetet, livslångt lärande och social ekonomi. Rapport 2008:1," (Östersund: Jämtlands läns museum, 2008), 14–16.

²⁹⁸ Davis Smith and Gay, *Active ageing in active communities. Volunteering and the Transition to Retirement*. 7.

²⁹⁹ Löfstrand and Wallin, "Det ideella kulturarvsarbetet, livslångt lärande och social ekonomi. Rapport 2008:1," 26.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 21–22; Da Milano, Gibbs, and Margherita, eds., *Volunteers in Museums and Cultural Heritage. A European Handbook*, 69–70.

A very important factor for many volunteers, however, is the community aspect. The air force museum writes, for instance, that "through volunteer activities, the Air Force museum gives many retirees an important basis for a much appreciated leisure and social activity." Previous research has also confirmed that volunteerism serves the important function of giving social capital. It is important to meet other people and to feel that you belong and thereby increase one's own self-esteem.³⁰¹

The volunteers interviewed view volunteer work as developmental in some way. Either it allows development for the town/site or it allows for personal development, which is a strong motivating factor for their work. Personal development can be about wanting to learn more about different topics and then share that knowledge with others or about developing as a person through interaction with others. The community that forms is also an important aspect that provides added value for the volunteer. You make new contacts, meet people you otherwise would not have met and work for the same cause, and the relationships that form are something in between friendships and professional contacts. Being part of something larger is also reported as being important. This might involve participating in museum activities or the town's development or creating an effective place of interest. Involvement can also be a matter of self-preservation and being able to live and work in a town. This interest is transformed through volunteerism into public welfare. For example, Ytterån's community centre has taken on responsibility for several things in the town's development: clearing away brushwood, collecting litter, planting flowers and ensuring that street lighting works in the village, so that it is a pleasant place to visit.³⁰²

Positive response lifts the volunteer work, and the fellowship that arises in the community centre can be seen as a direct reward. The connectedness can be among the volunteers or between volunteers and tour groups; it can be enough just to see in the faces of the visitors that they are enjoying the experience. But the response can also involve positive comments from visitors about the environment, the café or the exhibit. More specific rewards in the form of appreciation parties and dinners also occur.³⁰³ It is pointed out that it is positive to get direct feedback that the volunteer work contributes to something important, such as when the money earned helps finance activities at the museum.

³⁰¹ Löfstrand and Wallin, "Det ideella kulturarvsarbetet, livslångt lärande och social ekonomi. Rapport 2008:1," 23–24.

³⁰² Interview with Ytterån community centre.

³⁰³ e.g. Skansen; Jamtli; Föreningen Karlshamns museum.

Previous studies, too, have shown that it is important for volunteers to get something in return for their work, even if it is not pay or other remuneration. A British study shows that volunteers see their work as being both similar to that of the staff and as different. The similarities include the use of their knowledge, problem-solving and dedication to their work. The differences are in the quality of work and the lower stress level of the volunteers. It is very clear, however, that the volunteers did not expect any payment for their work, even though it was similar to that of personnel.³⁰⁴ Instead, what they wanted was appreciation and a sense of participation or group belonging.

Although much of the added value experienced by the volunteers is clearly the result of the intra-benefit-driven nature of the group, e.g. that they value the sense of belonging to a group or arrange parties together, they should get the attention and appreciation of the cultural heritage sites that wish to work with volunteers. If these are the values that volunteers themselves value the most, it is of great importance that they get this out of their volunteer efforts. This often requires that others notice what they do and show appreciation. For example, Skellefteå museum invites its volunteers to a traditional herring meal or to a theatrical performance when the season is over, to show their appreciation.³⁰⁵

Added value for visitors and for the museum

To be sure, the volunteers contribute to the business in different ways through their work. However, this does not mean that the volunteers should be regarded as cheap labour. Researcher Kirsten Holmes, for example, believes that the volunteers should rather be regarded as a group of unusually active visitors who participate diligently, since visitors and volunteers have proven to have about the same driving force behind their involvement in the museum. The volunteers also view themselves as a part of the staff, which makes them a bridge between the visitor and the museum.³⁰⁶ This means that they may have a meaningful role to play, with the museum as well as the visitors.

As mentioned previously, many volunteers contribute their expertise in certain areas. This is, of course, added value for the museum and the visitor, who can learn from the volunteer's vast knowledge. The volunteers should

³⁰⁴ Davis Smith and Gay, *Active ageing in active communities. Volunteering and the Transition to Retirement*. 10.

³⁰⁵ Survey response, Skellefteå museum.

³⁰⁶ Kirsten Holmes, "Volunteers in the heritage sector. A neglected audience?," in *Museum Management And Marketing*, ed. Richard Sandell and Robert R. Janes, *Leicester Readers in Museum Studies* (Oxon, UK: Routledge, 2007), 231.

therefore be viewed as people who not only come to the cultural heritage site to learn something, but also to contribute their own expertise.

Many of the cultural heritage sites that answered the questionnaire state that the volunteers add value. At the same time, those who do not have volunteers, but who are considering it, respond that volunteers could add something more. One museum states that, had they been working with volunteers, they would have been able to "broaden our networking and be more proactive in meeting our visitors".³⁰⁷ They also believe that volunteers could relieve the workload,³⁰⁸ or that they would be able to bring in new expertise.³⁰⁹ Even if they work with volunteers to some extent, they see more opportunities for them. For example, they would be able to keep buildings open that otherwise are closed,³¹⁰ which is already among their work tasks at other museums.³¹¹ Thus it is clear that the cultural heritage sites which already have volunteers, as well those which do not, see that volunteers can add value to the business. There can be differing opinions on the benefits or expenses of this added value, however. A number of museums state that it requires resources and energy to handle the volunteers,³¹² while others make comments that go more in the direction of volunteers being a resource that add something to the museum.³¹³

Internationally there are very different opinions on the volunteers as well – whether to view them as free and cheap labour, or whether they drain resources instead. Several studies indicate the latter. The majority of studies show the importance of coordinating the volunteer work, praising the volunteers for their efforts and occasionally training in what they are supposed to do.³¹⁴ There is also a great deal of this in the responses to the questionnaires, which is discussed above.

Interviews with Jamtlis Gynnare have expressed that creating added value for the museum often goes hand in hand with creating added value for the visitor. During summer there are actors in costumes making first-person interpretations of history. When the friendship society is in costume for the time period together with the regular actors, it benefits both the visitor, who gets a richer

³⁰⁷ Tobaks- och tändsticksmuseet.

³⁰⁸ Strindbergsmuseet.

³⁰⁹ Sjöfartsmuseet akvariet.

³¹⁰ Prince Eugen Waldemarsudde.

³¹¹ Sjöfartsmuseet akvariet.

³¹² e.g. Eksjö Museum.

³¹³ e.g. Blekinge Museum.

³¹⁴ Da Milano, Gibbs, and Margherita, eds., *Volunteers in Museums and Cultural Heritage. A European Handbook*, 24; Ehlers, Naegele, and Reichert, *Volunteering by older people in the EU*. 29.



At the autumn market at Skansen museum volunteers in costumes engage in role-playing to give visitors added value. Photo: Bengt Berglund.

experience from their museum visit, and the museum in general. The friendship society shows in various ways what life was like in the past and find it to be an appropriate task for them. From their life experiences the members have picked up knowledge about older objects and methods, for example. The personal meeting that occurs on these occasions is extremely important and formative for both the visitors and the volunteers, and the positive experience benefits the museum. Other occasions where the volunteer work generates added value, for the museum as well as for the visitors, is when they run a cafe in the museum's green area, arrange a lottery during the museum's Christmas market, participate in historical costume during the "Gregorian Market" in Östersund and as a living advertising space for the museum bringing new members into their association. In addition the friends association has performed handicraft projects, restorations, measurement and repair of furniture for the outdoor stage, which also must be viewed as creating added value both for visitors and the museum. The volunteer efforts provide openings for questions and dialogs about manners and customs of the past. The friends association feels they have good contact with the museum departments they work with and the association and the museum both feel that the collaboration is good.³¹⁵ The satisfaction with the collaboration should benefit both the employees and volunteers, since they benefit

³¹⁵ Interview with representative for Jamtlis Gynnare.

from each other's services, expertise and can both benefit the museum. However, it is important to point out that it is about creating added value, not replacing work tasks. Jamtlis Gynnare may occasionally work together with the employed staff for an event, for example to show people what to do or distribute tickets for guided tours. They then create added value for visitors by making things go faster than if only the staff were to do it, but the work would still have functioned. In the same manner, frying woodcutter's pancakes and baking thin flat bread are activities that otherwise could not be offered.

It may occasionally be unclear to the visitors who the staff members are and who a volunteer is. Just as the museums may set requirements for volunteers and staff, the visitors may also expect different things from volunteers than from the staff. At many cultural heritage sites the volunteers have small signs that they attach to their clothing to indicate that they are a member of the friends' association/volunteer group, not the staff.³¹⁶ A number of museums go a step further and have special costumes for volunteers.³¹⁷ There are also museums that do not specifically label who is a volunteer and who is staff.³¹⁸ Of course there is no reason to label who the volunteers are if they are not working with the visitors. But if they do, the volunteers and the museum may feel it is better to have this displayed, so that the visitors do not make unreasonable demands of the volunteers that they know are hard to live up to.

Financing of the business

There is some support from the Swedish state for associations that are suited for volunteer work. The Swedish government has appropriated organizational support, primarily for nongovernmental organizations, adult education and sports amounting to 780 million euros per year.³¹⁹ Municipalities also provide support to associations, both through direct contributions and by providing spaces, etc. A study, which surely is becoming outdated, but still shows some important trends within the volunteer sector, demonstrates how the volunteer activities are financed at the municipal level. It shows that approximately 60 per cent of the municipal support that goes to associations and volunteer activities goes to sports associations. Various sorts of cultural associations receive an average of 15 per cent of the support that the municipalities pay out.³²⁰ In addition, a large amount of the income comes from

³¹⁶ e.g. Vallby friluftsmuseum, Nationalmuseum, Malmö museer.

³¹⁷ Sveriges järnvägmuseum.

³¹⁸ e.g. Skansen, Svaneholms slottsmuseum, Stiftelsen Västerviks museum.

³¹⁹ "Nationell rapport avseende Sveriges arbete för att nå Europeiska unionens gemensamma mål för volontärverksamhet," 5.

³²⁰ Statskontoret, *I samhällets intresse? En samhällsekonomisk studie av den ideella sektorn*. 55–56.

membership fees and volunteer work which generates income. Thus the public sector finances a large number of volunteer activities.

The cultural heritage sites that take on volunteers also incur a number of expenses and have extra work for this, which in turn requires good management to be able to perform the tasks satisfactorily. "Who can afford to finance, and who has time to manage?", says one of the union representatives.³²¹ When the cultural heritage sites were asked about what expenses they have for their volunteers, the answers were very different. The Maritime History Museum pays SEK 60,000 per year for the volunteers' travel and food (19 volunteers). The Swedish Air Force Museum has just as much for travel, insurance, coffee and rental of a workshop space (60 volunteers). The Swedish Railway Museum estimates its expenses for volunteers to be SEK 50,000 (100 volunteers), while Eskilstuna City Museum has around SEK 80,000 in expenses (50 volunteers). Most of the museums have a hard time arriving at a total for their expenses, because they are split into several different financial entries. It is expenses for the staff's working hours when they hold lectures, introduce or educate volunteers,³²² expenses for coffee and food where the volunteers work³²³ and occasionally a Christmas party or end of the season dinner as a thank you.³²⁴ There are also financial entries such as travel/excursions³²⁵ or costumes.³²⁶ Thus there are a number of expenses related to having volunteers. Consequently, volunteers cannot be regarded as free labour. Taking care of volunteers is an expense. The question, from an economic perspective, is whether it pays to have volunteers.

Looking at volunteer work in general, a number of attempts have been made to estimate the value of the work. A study from 1995 estimates volunteer work in Sweden to be at least 7 billion per year,³²⁷ while in 2002 it was estimated to be 150 billion per year,³²⁸ and within the EU there are estimates of the value of volunteer work in Poland to be 124 million euros and in Great Britain to be 65 billion euros.³²⁹ Another study shows figures for the value of volunteer work of up to 14 per cent of the GNP.³³⁰ Even if the calculations

³²¹ Interview with the Vision trade union, Jamtli.

³²² e.g. Nordiska akvarellmuseet.

³²³ e.g. Optand teknikland.

³²⁴ e.g. Skellefteå Museum.

³²⁵ e.g. Uppsala medicinhistoriska museum.

³²⁶ e.g. Skansen.

³²⁷ Statskontoret, *I samhällets intresse? En samhällsekonomisk studie av den ideella sektorn*. 90.

³²⁸ Volontärbyrån.

³²⁹ European Volunteer Centre, "Manifest för frivilligheten i Europa," 2.

³³⁰ Csordás, "Volunteer management in cultural institutions", 18.

are different, and arrived at in different manners by different researchers, it is clear that the work of volunteers has great economic value.

The socioeconomic value that is arrived at for the volunteer work for specific cultural heritage sites must be viewed in relation to the expenses. The work of a volunteer cannot be compared to that of an employee. If you look at the cultural heritage sector, an organization in Great Britain that works with volunteers has calculated that 6 volunteers are needed to arrive at the same work effort as one employee.³³¹ There is no concise data on whether, in economic terms, having volunteers is a winning proposition. Several museums point out that the friends association collects money that makes it possible to purchase objects or art for the collections and other things, which allows the museum to acquire an object at a certain value. The Swedish Railway Museum estimates the value of the volunteers' work to be SEK 5 million, while they have expenses for the volunteers amounting to SEK 50,000. That indicates that it does pay, but more and better figures are needed to support this, since there is apparently a great deal of variation between museums in regards to expenses and gains.

One example of how it can work is Jamtlis Gynnare. During 2011 the association earned SEK 27,000 on activities that focus on intra-beneficial activities e.g. when they arrange parties for themselves. In the activities that focus on extra-beneficial activities, they earned SEK 308,000 and incurred expenses of SEK 88,000, for example for ingredients when they bake, etc., which has a surplus of SEK 220,000. This money went to purchasing items that are good for Jamtli. During 2011 they purchased fire baskets, textiles for the youth hostel, a motor for a veteran bus and they went to Stockholm to market Jamtli, which had a total value of SEK 246,000. The volunteers put in around 4,500 hours of work, or 2–3 work years. For Jamtli the efforts of the volunteers have great economic significance, while the efforts they not only earn money, but also give the visitors a great experience. Jamtli's expenses for the volunteers are hard to calculate. No statistical records are kept, and they come into contact with many people. One person on the staff works as a volunteer coordinator and has the main responsibility for the contacts with the friends association. She puts several hours into this each week, even though there are no reliable figures on how much time that is. The benefactors also meet in spaces that are owned by Jamtli which require heating, maintenance, etc. Thus there are a number of expenses related to this volunteer activity.

³³¹ Davis Smith and Gay, *Active ageing in active communities. Volunteering and the Transition to Retirement*. 21.

The finances are also an important matter to the volunteers themselves. People in Sweden are well aware of their rights and many people are involved in trade unions. The DIK union representative believes the prevailing mind set is that working for free is a bad thing, you are supposed to be paid for the work you do. That may be the general opinion. She does not believe that there are very many people who believe that it can be enriching and personally enlightening to work as a volunteer.³³²

Several questionnaires also state that it is both unethical and hard for people to work without pay.³³³ In the past, the volunteers have discussed the expenses that the volunteers have for travelling between their home and the site where they are a volunteer. These may be heavy for some people, so they would rather refrain from volunteering.³³⁴ However, receiving compensation for such expenses may be problematic in Sweden. In a debate between Lars Johansson (Social Democratic Party) and Anders Borg (Moderate Party) in 2007, it was put forth that you cannot always receive these compensations, without having to pay taxes on this income.³³⁵ Covering the costs of out-of-pocket expenses can be hard, however, even if most of the cultural heritage sites view it as reasonable to cover out-of-pocket expenses or to offer lunch or coffee when someone volunteers.

Final discussion

There are many volunteers in Sweden who get involved in the cultural heritage. It is good, because it gives these people a social context and a meaningful existence. People who get involved at cultural heritage sites are primarily elderly, which is both good and bad. Of course, it is always desirable to have volunteers of all ages, from both genders and from different ethnic groups. On the other hand, we know that the demographic development causes the group in the third age, that is to say those over the age of 60, to increase considerably in the coming years. Prior studies have demonstrated the health-promoting effects of an active life,³³⁶ and if you can keep yourself active, thereby healthier, by being a volunteer, it is a good activity from a social perspective as well as an individual perspective.

³³² Interview with the trade union DIK, Jamtli.

³³³ e.g. Vänermuseet; Falbygdens museum.

³³⁴ Ehlers, Naegele, and Reichert, *Volunteering by older people in the EU*. 30.

³³⁵ "Document from the Swedish Parliament. Protocol from the Chamber, 2007/08:67," §18.

³³⁶ Emmy Nilsson. *Var med och bestäm! Delaktighet och inflytande – en förutsättning för ett hälsosamt åldrande*, Folkhälsoinstitutet, 2008.

Volunteering is therefore mainly positive for volunteers. The question for this research project, however, has been what it is that makes volunteers more of a contentious topic in the cultural sector, with the focus on the cultural heritage sector, and which problems are experienced. I have also studied how you can work with volunteers to create added value, while avoiding repressive effects. The results point to some important factors: At cultural heritage sites that only have volunteers, or which are mainly run by these, volunteers are not viewed as problematic as all. The conflict arises at the cultural heritage sites that have a large number of professional staff, but also have volunteers. Much of it is due to uncertainty, which also, and occasionally to a greater degree, can be found among cultural heritage sites that only have employed staff. The uncertainty is in part about how to handle the volunteers, because they require time, training, safety measures, but most of all, they are viewed as a threat to the professional staff. There is often the feeling that the knowledge and training that the staff has is not valued and that there is a threat from repressing volunteers without training.

The way the volunteers are organized is also important to how well it works. It can be organized two ways: There can either be collaboration with an association where the volunteers are organized, or the cultural institutions themselves can organize the volunteers. At Swedish cultural heritage sites there are "social clubs" and "public members' schemes", to put it in Alix Slater's terms. That is to say the current volunteers are either organized as independent associations, often friends associations, or there is a group associated with the museum through someone on the staff being responsible for them, but which to a large extent are independent. Alix Slater has demonstrated that for the museums in Great Britain it is best to organize the activities themselves, because then you have more control over what gets done and can control the activities to meet the museum's needs. That is to say, the volunteers are driven by extra-benefit (integrated membership scheme). This is unusual in Sweden. To organize the volunteers into an association instead puts the focus on being together and the activities that the volunteers themselves want to do. That is, they are driven by intra-benefit. That often means that the museums do not have the same opportunity to have an influence on what they can get help with. On the other hand, organizing people in an association is something that follows Swedish traditions, and is therefore often more accepted by the trade union and staff. They are viewed as a collaborator, and do not have as big a responsibility for them. Many of the impediments that exist or are experienced pertain to the organization of the volunteers itself. That applies to insurance and liability, and many cultural heritage sites find that the simplest thing is to organize the volunteers into a separate association. There are also many examples of how volunteers

organized into associations in different ways make large contributions to the operations of the cultural heritage sites – both financially and through work efforts.

In regards to the repressive effects, there are obviously different opinions at different sites and this cannot be directly related to the way the volunteers are organized. Primarily among the institutions that do not work with volunteers, there is great concern that the volunteers will have repressive effects. Among those who have volunteers, there are two options: one that regulates what the volunteers are allowed to do, thereby safeguarding that there are no repressive effects, and one option where the volunteers actually do the same thing as the staff. This can be related to the degree of professionalism where the larger institutions with more employees and strong trade unions protect the staff's interests to a greater degree than smaller sites that depend on volunteers to get things done at all. It is noteworthy that in cases where there is a high degree of professionalism and functioning volunteer activities, there is a dialog with the trade union and the staff about appropriate work tasks and that these are clearly defined to clarify what kind of added value is being created, that this does not have repressive effects, and that there is respect for the professional knowledge that the trained staff has. Even if there is a dialog between different parties, and primarily at the sites where they do not have a dialogue, there is occasionally a concern that knowledge and training are not valued enough.

Another result of the study is that volunteer work creates added value for the volunteers themselves as well as for the cultural heritage institutions. It may not always be economic added value, because there is a great deal of uncertainty about whether volunteer work contributes economically, and that a great deal of time and resources are required for the volunteers to get the attention, training and the support they need to work effectively.

Thus there are good examples that as a cultural heritage site you can have a good collaboration with volunteers, but good organization and a lot of work is required to achieve that, and perhaps most of all, the will and the courage to do it, because there are many impediments that must be overcome.

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Managing Director of Fjällmuseet, 21 November 2011

Managing Director of Optand Teknikland

Volunteer coordinator for Jamtli's Gynnare at Jamtli, December 2011.



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