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## **REPORT from the activity of MANKO Association.**

Innovative forms of activization and education of seniors in Poland

### ***Introduction***

MANKO Association as Public Benefit Organization (PBO 1%) deals since 20 years with social marketing, i.e. organization of educational and activating social campaigns.

Since 10 years MANKO Association deals with policy for seniors – activation and education of elder persons, especially in the area of health, safety, law and new media. For this purpose in national and international area MANKO conducts many projects for seniors. In the following publication current situation of elder persons and the most effective activities supporting them will be presented. Governmental programmes and more detailed the most effective activities of Manko Association for seniors such as: Friendly Community for Seniors, National Senior Card, National Magazine Senior Voice, Safe Senior – Stop for Manipulation – Don't let be cheated, Solid with Seniors – together we will manage! and International Senior Days were depicted.

### ***Situation of elder persons in Poland***

As it results from the report of Ministry of Family, Work and Social Policy at the end of 2018 the number of population in Poland amounted 38,4 millions, including over 9,5 millions were people at the age of 60 years and more (nearly 25%). From the viewpoint of activity of Manko Association important issue is the diagnosis concerning education and activization of seniors. As results of research “Education of adults” show, in 2018 elder persons were characterized by relatively low educational activity measured by the participation in formal and informal education and informal learning. Developing with age decrease of participation in educational actions took place in all analysed categories of educational actions. Low activity was noted in the case of actions from the field of informal education (organized out-of-school educational

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actions, among others courses, trainings, seminars) and informal learning understood as independent acquiring competences in order to broaden knowledge and skills. In Poland the level of participation in education and training in age category of 55–74 years belongs still to the lowest levels in UE and lasts since longer time – for many previous years it did not exceed 1%. Almost completely this participation is performer in the framework of informal education (Ministry for Family, Work and Social Policy, 2019, p. 50).

Illness, loneliness, disability, feeling of uselessness or life in poverty can be counted to the most important problems of persons 60+. Each of them indicates existing marginalization of elder persons as the group and the example of it can be gradual limiting, eliminating them from active social and professional life at the moment of exceeding the limit of retirement age (Gałuszka & Gałuszka, 2017, p. 174).

It is confirmed by the research of MANKO Association, which shows that the greatest problems of elder people are loneliness, access to health service, insufficient economic measures and also above mentioned low social activity and the awareness from the field of health, law, economics and safety.

### ***National actions supporting elder people***

Social policy towards elder people is still conducted as well at central level as regional level. It is centrally carried out mainly by among others Ministry for Family and Social Policy and Ministry of Health. Leading projects of Ministry for Family and Social Policy is Programme ASOS, Senior Plus and Care 75 Plus. Policy for seniors is conducted also by local governments at the level of voivodeship, district and community and also non-governmental organizations. Poland is divided into 16 voivodships, 314 districts and 2 477 communities. Currently over 640 Universities of the Third Age, 338 Communal Senior Councils (Ministry for Family 2019, p.50), 500 Houses and Clubs Senior Plus ([www.gov.pl](http://www.gov.pl)) and 859 Residential Homes (Central Statistical Office, 2017, p.1) function in Poland.

### ***Programme Friendly Community for Seniors***

Programme Friendly Community for Seniors assumes the support for local governments in conducting policy for seniors. It makes the groups: local government officials, seniors and entrepreneurs active for actions for seniors. The authorities of communities and cities publish together with local seniors and MANKO Association local edition of National Senior Card, which is active in their locations and in whole Poland. Each inhabitant of community, who is over 60, can obtain such Card free of charge in some minutes in commune office. The most important purpose of Programme Friendly Community for Seniors is the activization of seniors through co-creating Programme. Just seniors – inhabitants of community are committed in the distribution of Card among other seniors and acquiring local companies honouring Card. Thus Programme assumes education and activization of also local en-

trepreneurs in the scope of silver economy and purchasing power of the group 60+. Entrepreneurs who become partners of Programme declare honouring Card, i.e. giving discounts for its possessors. In return for it they are promoted as senior-friendly companies among local society and in whole Poland. It is thus their promotional strength and advantage, what translates in increasing tourist attractiveness of their region. Programme was joined already by 160 local governments, 400 thousands seniors obtained National Senior Card and over 2200 sale points in whole Poland honour it by giving discounts.

Community, in order to obtain certificate of Friendly Community for Seniors has to fulfil following criteria apart from publishing local edition of Nation Senior Card:

- encourage local entrepreneurs to participation in Programme National Senior Card;
- distribute among its inhabitants National Senior Card and Magazine National Senior Voice;
- organize at least once yearly Senior Day or other event for people 60+;
- possess or support creating organizations for seniors, for example Senior Club or Universities of the Third Age,
- support existing senior council or try to create it,
- make inhabitants of community possible to participate in National Senior Days in Cracow,
- educate in the cooperation with MANKO Association its inhabitants in the scope of consumer, legal safety, newest forms of activization and education of people 60+ and also patient and citizen rights.

### ***National Senior Card***

In order to obtain certificate of Friendly Community for Seniors local government in the cooperation with Association and its senior organizations publish local (communal or district) edition of National Senior Card, which entitles to discounts in already over 2200 sale points in whole Poland. In the majority these are institutions related to health and spending free time, i.e. health centres, health resorts, sanatoriums, rehabilitation units, swimming pools, fitness, cafés, cinemas and theatres. Seniors possessing such card are more active, mobile and more willing to use such sale points, what in obvious way translates in their state of health. What is important, National Senior Card is also activating tool. As it is co-created by seniors who seek themselves for companies, which want to honour Card and distribute it among other seniors who are often inactive and lonely. It is so next method of activization and commitment of seniors in senior policy and the offer for seniors proposed by local governments. National Senior Card is possessed already by over 400 thousands people. For two years now, the Magazine National Senior Voice and the National Senior Card have also reached Polish Seniors living outside the country.

### **Senior Voice**



Krzysztof Zanussi (Polish film and theatre director, producer and screenwriter) with Magazine „Senior Voice”

Next condition for joining programme Friendly Community for Seniors by local government is promotion and distribution of Magazine National Senior Voice among seniors, which is tool of activization and education of inhabitants of community. The most widely read column of publication is the cycle „Think healthy”. Articles as well from the field of prophylaxis, modern treatment and preventing civilization illnesses (diabetes, hypertension, heart diseases, anility, atherosclerosis etc.) and diseases of musculoskeletal system are published there. Advices of for example geriatrician, cardiologist or dietician appear also there. The magazine is tool of motor and mental activization due to numerous contests promoted in the magazine, i.e. *Stylish Seniors*, *Senior Allotment Holder*, *Senior Music Lover*, *Moto-Retro*, *Love over 60*, *Animal as medicament against loneliness* or *Give us Your recipe*. Precautionary activity is carried out also by campaign *Chase away sadness*. In Senior Voice experts and seniors themselves express their opinions about reasons of treatment and coping with depression. Readers say about it, how they were treated in the case of depression through among others intellectual and physical activity, music and membership in senior organizations. Within the framework of project and column under title Civil Senior Voice co-financed from PROO Funds, National Institute of Freedom, readers write letters about their problems, express remarks and propose changes.

### **Senior Days and Senioralia**

Next requirement for obtaining the title of Friendly Community for Seniors is the necessity of organization of Senior Days at least once yearly. In this undertaking Association MANKO supports local government. Such event consists of the cycle of lecture/workshops from the field of health and free of charge medical examinations and consultations (pressure, hearing, sight, BMI, sugar etc.). For seniors from partner

communities also National Senioralia in Krakow (Picture 1) are organized by Manko Association in Cracow once yearly, during which very similar programme, but on much larger scale is carried out. Each years over 2000 seniors from 70 cities take part in the event. After solemn mass in St.Mary's Church they participate in the parade from Main Square to Kijów Centre Cinema, where they use over 30 examination-consultation stands and numerous lectures. The show of Stylish Seniors and Inter-generational Event (disco) with DJ Wika are added to it.



Picture 1. National Senioralia in Krakow

### ***Communal Senior Councils and Universities of the Third Age***

Within the framework of cooperation also appearing and development of acting in the area of community or district senior organizations, i.e. Universities of the Third Age, Senior Clubs and Communal Senior Councils are also supported. Association proposes also them participation in national campaigns and contests and also already mentioned National Senior Days in Cracow. Manko Association prepares trainings increasing their qualifications in the scope of management, security, activation, promotion, recruitment or acquiring external funds. They can also use educational materials of Association and advices of experts from the filed of prophylaxis and activization.

### ***Safe Senior – Stop for Manipulation – Don't let be cheated***

Within the framework of Campaign Safe Senior MANKO Association conducts Social Campaign Stop for Manipulation – Don't let be cheated. The main purpose of above mentioned campaign is education in the scope of thriftiness, economics, consumer right, especially in respect of manipulation sale techniques (Picture 2). Due to the fact that Seniors are particularly exposed to such kind of activity, MANKO Association conducts trainings and workshops dedicated for Seniors. It cooperates also with local governments and entrepreneurs in order to limit the possibility of hiring area for such activity, what also increases safety of seniors, blocking the possibility of conducting presentations and limiting in such way the scale of this problem. MANKO Association prepared also radio, television and internet spot, which is published in Youtube portal ([www.youtube.com/GlosSenioraTV](http://www.youtube.com/GlosSenioraTV)). Association extends in

the framework of its activity the scope of range and fulfils the programme of Friendly Community for Seniors, European Senior Card and European Senior Voice.



Picture 2. Workshop „Stop for manipulation”

### ***Solid with Seniors – together we will manage!***

In March 2020 the world had to face the pandemic of coronavirus. Within one month the activity of all senior organizations was stopped and seniors were ordered to lock themselves in their houses. What is worse, not responsible mass media began spreading panic and fear in the society and especially among elder people being in the group of increased risk. MANKO Association started then new stage of actions supporting seniors during pandemic. With respect to words of the member of Programme Council of MANKO Association – geriatrician, director of Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration Hospital in Cracow doctor Krzysztof Czarnobilski: „Fear, panic, isolation, mental and physical inertness is much more dangerous for seniors than virus itself” we initialized the campaign “Solid with Seniors – together we will manage”. Within its framework we reactivated Helpline of Senior Voice, we began distributing by post special educational and activating Special Packages, recording and emitting online lectures within the framework of Senior Voice TV, activating seniors through encouraging them to help other people and sew masks, organizing numerous contests and educational meetings in the open air, including activating and dancing voyages on the Vistula, maintaining all restrictions related to epidemic. Through the action “Animal is remedy for loneliness” we encourage also to adoption of animals from animal shelters. In turn the aim of next action under title “Senior, don’t be afraid of physician” is encouraging seniors not to belittle symptoms of disease for fear of contact with health service.

Campaign „Solid with Seniors ; Together We Will Manage” obtained the support of Presidential Couple of Republic of Poland and honorary patronage of many ministries and local governments.

### ***European Senior Card***

Project European Senior Card is the extension of Programme National Senior Card. Currently Cards are issued in eight languages: Polish, German, Lithuanian, Romanian, Italian, Slovenian, Bulgarian and Turkish. At the present moment European Senior Card is honoured in all sale points in Poland, while Team of MANKO Association focuses its attention on it, so that possibly great number of sale points in Europe honour European Senior Card, helping therefore citizens of Europe in the scope of silver economy. Simultaneously Project of European Senior Card is aimed at establishing and developing international cooperation at the level of Europe in the scope of increasing life level of Seniors as well in economic area as in the range of health, lifestyle or activization.

### ***European Senior Voice***

European Senior Voice is the extension of Magazine National Senior Voice. Until now European Senior Voice was published in eight languages: Polish, German, Lithuanian, Romanian, Italian, Slovenian, Bulgarian and Turkish. The project is aimed at making possible to acquaint oneself with issues concerning Seniors from other countries in native language. Undoubtedly it increases the possibility of extension of horizons concerning life of Seniors in neighbouring countries. Simultaneously subject matter touched on in European Senior Voice concerns directly life of Seniors and issues, which they meet independent from it, what nationality they have.

Manko Association is example of combination of activity in the scope of activization, education and entrepreneurship of seniors. It creates also platforms for cooperation for seniors between institutions and between sectors, which are increasingly implemented in other countries as checked and effective solutions. The article indicated possibilities of carrying out effective activity by non-governmental organization in the issue of obtained indexes, results, range, quality, number of recipients.

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