

## **Study tour - Brandenburg, Germany (10<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> May 2011)**

The organizers of this study visit to Germany have been the Brandenburg 21 and Brandenburgian Network for "Living Villages". Representatives of Slovenian Rural Development Network participated in this study trip together with partners from other 8 countries partners to Grundtvig Project: Czech Republic, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Finland, Sweden, Slovakia and Croatia. Slovenian Rural Development Network was represented by two representatives: Aleš Zidar and Goran Šoster.

### The Agenda

10.05.2011.

13.00 - 16.00     Arrival Airport Schönefeld / Tegel

16.00 - 18.30     Opening and Presentation "Heimvolkshochschule" Seddiner See  
Presentation Competence Centre Falkensee Training Curriculum and  
Experiences with training of Trainers as promoters for voluntary  
engagement

18.30             *Dinner*

„Coming together evening" with a short presentation of the Grundtvig  
partners organisations  
Overnight stay in Seddin

11.05.2011.

7.30 - 9.00       *Breakfast*

9.00 – 11.30     Presentation of „Academy 50plus" (focus: professional training)  
„The effect of the demografic change to the generation 50plus"  
*Coffee break*

Project presentation: „I wanna grow old HERE"

13.00 - 14.15     Punting tour on arms of river Spree incl. *lunch* "delicious Spreewald"  
(SPREEWALD is an UNESCO-Biosphere)

14.15 - 15.00     Tour through Raddusch village by feet

15.00 – 16.30     Sports- und culture-barn Raddusch  
Presentation of PLA (Participation-Learning-Action) methodology as  
activating instrument

17.30 – 20.00     Participation in jour fixe of villagers and entrepreneurs in Pretschen  
*Dinner*

Traditional songs and clothes, presented by the SPREEWALD WOMANS  
CHORUS

Travel to Wulkow / Overnight in Wulkow

12.05.2011.

8.00 - 9.00       *Breakfast at the Wulkow eco-storehouse*

9.00 - 12.00     Tour through Wulkow by feet

12.00 - 13.00     Field trip along the „Road of Sunflowers", an regional initiative of  
villagers to open their houses for specific purposes (arts, cafe)

13.00 – 15.00     Visit and rest in the restaurant of a women's group (Land-frauen-  
Café) in Groß Neuendorf and view across the river Oder (PL: ODRA),  
the border to Poland

16.00 - 18.00     visit and rest in the „Kunstspeicher(arts-barn)" Friedersdorf

18.00 - 20.00     Discussion with the district commissioner, representatives of Seniors  
and the presi-dent of the districts parliament of MOL-district

20.00             *Dinner*

## Overnight stay in Wulkow

13.05.2011.

- 8.00 - 8.30 *Breakfast at the Wulkow eco-storehouse*  
11.00 - 11.15 Conference-opening  
11.15 - 12.30 „Village remains village”? Changes und persistent role of the village as a rural settlement und local community  
12.30 - 13.15 *Lunch*  
14.00 - 15.40 Experiences of the European Village Movements  
15.40 - 16.10 *Coffee break*  
16.15 - 18.30 Discussion: Village Movements, Village networks in Europe and similar phenomena in Germany – Experiences and consequences  
19.30 - 22.00 *Reception for the conference participants*

14.05.2011.

- 9.00 - 12.00 International Exchange of experiences in practical village development - Discussion in six workshops  
A. Self organization of villages in relation to the municipality  
B. Networking of villages  
C. Role of farms and farmers in the village development  
D. Sustainable alternatives in village economy and local infrastructure  
E. Active facing to the demographic change  
F. The 50-Plus generation in the village (Experiences of an international Project – „GRUNGTIVIG”)  
12.00 - 12.45 *Lunch*  
13.00 - 15.30 Panel discussion with politicians/ members of the parliamentary parties of Deutscher Bundestag  
Results / Conclusions / Recommendations of the conference

On first day the group visited the Seddin Adult Learning Centre - “Heimvolkshochschule” on Neusddiner See. After the short presentation of all participants the manager of the centre informed us about the process of revitalisation of the Centre which had been used as stable for horse breeding for many decades ago. It was opened in 1994 with help of German government and some other private donators. This residential school centre is used for seminars, meeting place, conference facilities for multifunctional purposes. As an adult learning centre it embodies a holistic approach to professional agricultural, political and cultural education. Nowadays this active “country side program” offers courses and work experience with high quality training possibilities. Seven persons are working there. They cover ca. 40% of costs by themselves and the rest are funded by EU and German government.

Participants made a brief visit to all facilities provided by Adult Learning.

Ms. Marion Piek, president of Brandenburg 21 introduced her work by presentation about “Revival of the settlements. She informed participants about Brandenburg region and presented the work of Brandenburg 21 organization and the Working Group “Living Villages”. She pointed out some of their activities such as “The Day of the village in Brandenburg” which is performed from 2007 to 2011 and how to mobilize the village potential and local resources to stay “living” and sustainable. She pointed out that good connections with local government should be respected (mayors are usually volunteers). She introduced to us their ecological brand products local “From here” (VON HIER).

Carole Werner from the association Brandenburg 21 presented the project “Multiple generational homes in Brandenburg”. So far there are 28 of such houses in Brandenburg, where young people are helping the elderly or the elder people help the younger ones.

"Coming together evening" - Mr. Doboš met Ms. Angela Fleischer - Wetzel from RAA - Brandenburg, who works projects in Croatia (Vukovar in particular) and promised to prepare some of the tourist projects for the LAG Baranja.

On second day Ms. Ulrike Enders /LISUM Brandenburg, country institute for school and media had a short presentation of "Demographic Changes in Brandenburg and generation 50 plus". The "Living as a senior resident in Brandenburg" was presented by Mr. Klaus Spaeth as a project that treats the young elderly and older elderly. The project has multiple objectives of which the most important is that older residents in rural areas should be active as long as possible. The slogan is "Here I can grow old" and it was adopted in 4 regions according to the plan (2005, 2007, 2009 and 2011). Each region plan has its own characteristics: infrastructure, mobility, collaboration, friendship and creativity.

Study tour continued in Village Raddusch with punting tour on arms of the river Spree with casual lunch on boats in protected area of biosphere natural reserve in Spreewald (UNESCO) and walking tour through Raddusch village, and reception in sport and cultural village Hall Raddusch. Accent was on the presentation of PLA (Participation-Learning-Action), methodology as activating instrument.

Village Pretschen: we had a discussion with the Demeter eco producer and entrepreneur in Pretschen Mr. Guenther Thiele, and attended traditional songs and clothes evening presented by the Spreewald Women Choir. At the village Pretschen there is minority group of inhabitants who are of Slavic origin (Lausitz Sorben). Welcomed by their Head Mr. Guenther Thiele and acquainted with the functioning of their government in the village, entrepreneurship in the countryside, restoration of abandoned farm buildings and storehouses, and visited the local Protestant church.

Particularly striking impression on all participants left the show and singing of Spreewald Women Choir.

On third day walk through the village Wulkow guided by Mr. Martin Merk.

Wulkow village is famous for its eco store house, UFO – eco house, herbal garden, solar equipment on the storehouse building, exhibition room, accommodation and learning facilities were participants had a discussion with the district governor, representatives of seniors and politicians of MOL district. Ecological side of this village was awarded some years ago.

Participants met members of ERCA (European Rural Community Association) in Wulkow and made a field trip along the "Road of Sunflowers", a regional initiative of villagers to open up their houses for tourists for specific purposes (coffee shops, storehouse with coffee room, art exhibition and Info-point).

On this study visit partners learned how some of partners solve a problem or a specific issue in their local environment and how important it is to make networks on all levels.

On fourth day participants attended "International Village Conference" in Berlin. Conference was dealing with activities in rural areas in Europe and explains the changes and persistent role of the village as a rural settlement and local community. There were several interesting presentations on the Conference such as "Village remains a village", experiences of village movements in Europe, the power of rural communities (Stefan Bond) and Tele-conference by Franz Nahrada – project leader of GIVE and "Self organisation of the villages in relation to the municipality" by Prof. dr. Kurt Krumbach, Brandenburgian Network for Living Villages, member of ERCA and LRF - Berlin. Vanessa Halhead from Scotland, manager of ERCA, talked about Substance and generalized experiences of the Village movement, experiences of Dutch Village Movement on local level, including village planning. Estonian village movement Koduknat discussed about regional networking and cooperation with LEADER AND CSOs. Prof. Eero Uusitalo, - SYTY explained the work of Finnish Village movement.

Afterwards the “World Cafe” was organized in seven circles.

Participants had opportunity for international exchange of experiences in practical village development. The 50+ generation in the village – experiences from the international project Grundtvig were presented by Silke Stroeber, Marion Piek and Uwe Neumann. Italian participants presented their contributions to rural development. Representative from Sweden invited all participants to Rural conference in Sweden.

