

Stories from Užice, Valjevo, and Plandište

The problem: **lack of information** about the rights and opportunities that older people have. For example, if a person lives alone, is neglected, and is self-neglected, the solution may be to go to a nursing home. Older people think that nursing homes are a hall of death and they do not want to go there. Social workers use the following positive solution - they are shown nursing home leaflets, and relatives drive them to see what life is like there. Social workers also send the following message: the nursing home is not the ultimate solution, and if an old person does not like to live there, he&she can change his&her decision.

An interesting exchange took place in a focus group involving the elderly, geronto-housewives, and social workers. The old people presented their dilemmas, and then the social worker explained their rights and the institutional procedures for achieving those rights, for example. The solution is simple: she offered them the right information, and a way to solve their problems because they didn't have the information.

The problem is communication with **people with dementia**. Geronto housewives use special strategies called white lies to persuade them to eat, not to jump out the window ... Eg. one kept a user who wanted to pick cherries from the wood that stretched to her window (she was in danger of falling) by drawing her attention to other things in the household. He constantly uses the distraction strategy.

The problem - **people with dementia** who live alone tend to take medication without control. Geronto housewives have the following solution: keep medicines locked up.

The problem is **the self-neglect** of the elderly. What is it like to get her to change? The geronto-housewife uses PS - when one grandmother changed her clothes, she praised her, and then she was curious to find out if her grandmother had more such beautiful dresses. The geronto-housewife sent a compliment and praise, and the grandmother changed more often.

The problem is **the self-neglect** of the elderly. How to get an elderly person to take a bath? Geronto housewives have the following solution - white lies: "Someone important is coming to see you and you need to change/take bath."

The problem is: one of the users did not want to get dressed. He was always in his underwear. She felt uncomfortable and told him that, and then she used the following solution - she rang him every time and waited a while before entering the house.

The problem is: the elderly give up the help of geronto housewives because they are **ashamed** or they are simply used to loneliness. Geronto housewives use the following solution: they term their services with clients, e.g. for a month. The message is: If you don't like the way I work, you can give up a month from today. Nobody gives up - it's an experience, because they quickly get used to the presence of a geronto-house wife and they receive needed help.

The problem - is a sense of **shame**. Some elderly people, who can no longer maintain personal hygiene, when they get wet, feel ashamed and do not want to be changed by geronto housewives. One of them uses the following solution - she normalizes what happened. She says: It happened to me then and there. It happens to everyone. Not terrible.

The problem is **inability to get in touch with family members**. A part of the users of the "home help" service have family members with whom they do not live in the same household. Such a situation limits and reduces their communication and creates a feeling of loneliness and isolation. In the case of (at least) one geronto-housewife, there is an interesting practice of assisting in establishing and maintaining communication between family members and the elderly (service user). Namely, thanks to the knowledge and skills of using digital technologies (applications for video communication on a tablet), geronto-housewives help maintain daily communication between family members (they help to establish video calls and use other ways to connect the elderly with family members)

The problem is **sadness and depression**. There is an example of the man who after his wife's death, withdrew from all social contacts, and felt lonely and depressed. His neighbor motivates him to become a member of the pensioners association. She invited him to come once and see what it looked like, and since she invited him to come once and see what it looked like, and since she is also the widow and a good friend of his, he agreed. She called him and went to the club with him until he became a permanent member.

The problem is **absence of social contacts/social isolation**. Those older who are active, invite inactive to participate in various activities, socialize, organize parties, trips, sports games... The message is sent from mouth to mouth

The problem is **social isolation**. Several elderly people live alone and face with sadness, low quality of life, and self-neglect. PD solutions offered by gerontohouse wife are to show special attention towards that particular person. For example, one of them is buying a birthday present for one granny, the other bought little things for the holidays for users (these are modest,

normal, and lonely people). Some gerontohouse wives are treating the elderly as family members - drive them when and where needed, contact relatives...

The problem of **loneliness/social isolation** - this is the solution that has been planned but has not yet been implemented in practice. A dozen lonely elderly people have the task of calling one person in the same situation every morning to ask how he is and what he needs. This expands the circle of people who communicate and feel useful.

The problem is **insufficient independence** of the elderly in their daily functioning. Old people who are immobile or have limited mobility cannot function independently on a daily basis (going to the store, pharmacy, preparing meals, etc.). Regardless of the significant help of geronto-housewives, there is a need to involve other members of the local community. For example, members of the house council (in several buildings in Užice) are delivering groceries to older neighbors. The members, ie the president of the house council, organize daily procurements for older members of the building who are not able to perform daily procurements on their own. The president of the house council cooks lunch for the service user several times a week. He helps other people in the building with groceries (going to the store). It is an organization of the purchase of groceries, medicines, and other products for everyday use. This activity is not always performed by the president of the house council, but he organizes the purchase and procurement for the older members of the building in which she lives.

The problem is **the workload of gerontohouse wives**. During working hours geronto housewives cannot perform their work duties, due to home obligations, and the user is dissatisfied. One geronto housewife uses the following solution: she skips the queue and does not pay attention to people who are in line and who are protesting. She has an excuse - the user is alone, and for her it is necessary to finish the job. He ignores criticism.

The problem is **older people's distrust of geronto housewives** - they think they are taking their money. There are several solutions: one has envelopes in which she puts money, bills, and change for each of the users separately. Others have a reverse - if they take something from the user, they sign that they took it, and when they return it (money, health card identification), they ask the elderly person to sign that it was returned to them.

The problem is **economic exploitation**. Children or relatives take money from their pensions, or the elderly are blackmailed into having their property transferred. The elderly are using the following solution - to maintain their autonomy, they retain the property. The pensioners' in club in Plandište talks openly about this topic.

Problem: **economic violence in an institution for the elderly**. Family members or relatives visit the elderly in a home and take money from them (from a pension) in certain situations. Often this practice is justified by the purchase for the nursing home user himself. The problem is especially pronounced in senile people. The home administration gives its users the opportunity to leave money in the safe. They leave the user's money in the safe (up to 100 EUR), and sign the reverse so that it is known who took it and how much money. If family members take money, they must do so in the presence of users (and of course in the presence of employees).