

With Gdynia throughout your entire life

INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR AN INTER-GENERATIONAL CITY



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LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

The history of our city shows that people are the most valuable assets of our local community. The mission of local government is to create the right conditions for every citizen, regardless of their age, abilities or disadvantages. Not only does presenting the strength of subsequent generations cement the local community, but it also shows the way to create inter-generational policies that allow us to draw from mutual experience and create a common vision for the future of Gdynia.

In recent years, the demographic structure of cities has changed radically. The trends we observe clearly show that the average age of city dwellers is soaring. This is characteristic of the entire country as well as the EU. Therefore, to secure a beneficial coexistence of different social groups and meet various demands, we have been obliged to gather representatives of all ages around one table.

The inter-generational dialogue, launched by the City of Gdynia Council Resolution of September 28, 2016 will continue until March 2018. Within its framework, we would like to speak to both senior citizens and the younger people around them, their families and neighbours. We will also extend the invitation to those engaged in shaping the community of Gdynians: representatives of NGOs, entrepreneurs, teachers, artists, educators, community organisers and civil servants.

We repeatedly reach for innovative and unconventional methods to make our city flourish. Thanks to them, Gdynia counts itself among the leaders of social changes that are appreciated in Poland and across Europe. I believe that we can create and implement a true inter-generational pact that, at its heart, will have a common vision of Gdynia as a city well-prepared for a healthy process of ageing.

The publication we present to you today is a review of innovative initiatives directed at senior citizens, which forms the basis of a new inter-generational social policy. While wishing you an enjoyable read, I also encourage you to join the discussion on the direction of changes and to put forward new solutions towards improving the quality of life in our city.



WOJCIECH SZCZUREK
Mayor of Gdynia

A city listening to the voice of its people

ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTER-GENERATIONAL POLICY - A CONVERSATION WITH MICHAŁ GUĆ, GDYNIA'S DEPUTY MAYOR IN CHARGE OF INNOVATION

⊗ Senior citizens of Gdynia are...

active and committed to the city. I base this statement not only on the number of students of the University of the Third Age in Gdynia, but also on my professional experiences being that my job involves face-to-face contact with senior citizens of Gdynia every day.

I could talk at length about the arguments supporting this initiative and give you many examples of our local government's actions for citizens aged 60+ to enable them to achieve the fullest involvement in the life of Gdynia. The fact that you end your professional career cannot also impose an end on your cultural or leisure activity. Nor does it mean that you should lock yourself at home because the city has no interesting pastimes to offer to you. On the contrary, in each senior citizen there is huge potential that sometimes needs a little help to be unlocked. By potential, I mean work experience, knowledge and special skills, but also knowledge of our local history. Many of our senior citizens still remember the times when Gdynia was founded, when the port was growing and the city followed suit. All in all, this is a capital we cannot let go to waste and about which we should care.

⊗ So let us talk now about "how it is done" in Gdynia, as many local solutions in senior citizens policy were introduced here as a national innovation. And they still are a role model.

The local government of Gdynia began to establish the framework of the senior citizens' policy 12 years ago. It was based on 2 pillars: care and activation. The Muni-



cipal Social Services Centre dealt with social care issues, while the Senior Activity Centre (Centrum Aktywności Seniora, CAS) and the network of clubs in different city districts were responsible for activation. The University of the Third Age in Gdynia (GUTW) was established. We launched a Gdynia 55+ programme to activate people approaching the Third Age. In 2004, we also established the first council of senior citizens in Poland. It was important to us to consult our actions aimed at senior citizens with these senior citizens themselves because they are the best experts and know best what is needed. We cannot imagine creating an offer for any group of Gdynianans in isolation from these groups' expectations. In the case of senior citizens, that process of listening to their voices is crucial. Their abilities to take advantage of a sport or cultural offer may be limited due to health or family reasons. It is important to understand all these circumstances and account for them when planning for in progress.

⊗ That means care and activation but also participation.

Yes, and in the fullest sense as we have witnessed this direction returning good results. Hence, we made participation the third pillar of our city's senior citizens policy.

The significance of the ten-odd members of the Council on Seniors increased considerably. Participants in all types of activities gained more and more influence on the offer of both these institutions. This resulted in a growing number of active senior citizens. It is worth mentioning here that this number is still getting bigger and the current number of GUTW students stands at thousands of students, and more than 10 000 students.

Let us come back to our actions from a few years ago. We asked senior citizens to join a dialogue on the quality of care services, which resulted in developing a standard that is used nowadays as a template for contracting these services by the Municipal Social Services Centre. During special study walks, senior citizens then evaluated Gdynia's space to facilitate commuting.

Here, 500 people aged 55+ joined a Citizens' Panel to evaluate, among others, the services offered by the city.

Year by year, we have witnessed the growing engagement of senior citizens in drawing up the Citizens Budget. Not only do they vote, but they also put forward their own projects. I also welcome the interest of this group of citizens in consultations on the Communal Regeneration Programme. Senior citizens' stories have enabled us to create sentimental maps of the four areas undergoing regeneration. At the end of 2016, a good piece of news reached us that both study walks and sentimental maps will find their place in the second edition of the "Golden Book of Best Practice on the Social Engagement of Senior Citizens" produced by the Commissioner for Civil Rights Protection. It is already our second distinction won in this competition. The first edition awarded a range of initiatives under the banner of "Gdynia's Dialogue with its Senior Citizens".

⊗ Is the local government satisfied with the current level of senior citizens' engagement?

We believe that it is good but we also realise that a large group still needs to be reached and encouraged to take an active part in the life of the city. The introduction of "Gdynia Senior Plus" card is one of our most recent initiatives. It allows people aged 60+ to use some special tailored offers. As many as 2,000 people collected their cards in just 5 days! It is yet another proof that senior citizens of Gdynia live their lives to the full and the role of the local government is to arrange the best circumstances possible. That is why we launch new inter-generational consultations.

⊗ Inter-generational? How does it impact on developing senior citizens' policy in the city?

We could say it is another more advanced stage. In July 2016, the World Health Organisation awarded Gdynia the title of Age-Friendly City. Strengthened by this title, we took a decision to look at our city not only through the needs of senior citizens, but by taking a multi-perspective approach, get a broader picture. This is a comprehensive approach, which differs from analysing groups and needs separately.

Senior citizens policy is focused on a particular group of people: the elderly. When talking about the city we do not want to limit ourselves to people aged 60+ or 65+. We want to open ourselves up to actions that target all age groups. That is why we in Gdynia talk more and more often about inter-generational policy engaging partners of all ages and all backgrounds.

What I mean are NGOs, sport clubs and cultural organisations. The opinion of the Council of Seniors is very important, but we will also listen to the views of the Youth City Council. The seniors' study walks that I have already mentioned are a proof of many advantages we can receive. The polls were carried out by young people from lower and upper secondary schools from Gdynia.

In Gdynia, we have only just entered this joint, inter-generational path. I hope that over time we will be joined by other local authorities.



Social innovations

- how we do it

in Gdynia



JAROSŁAW JÓZEFczyk

Deputy Director of the Municipal Social Services Centre

In 2006–2007 in Gdynia, an animated discussion about modern social care began.

It involved, among other things, a vision of how to manage the Municipal Social Services Centre and social care in general, as well as structural funds that allow us to think about projects as a driving force of the new system. As a result of discussion and considerations, we became convinced that we wanted to manage social care through clearly defined issues with which Gdynians struggle. Amongst them, elderly care, disabled care, homelessness and family cohesion were deemed the most important.

The first big project carried out by MOPS (Municipal Social Services Centre in Gdynia) was entitled “Family Closer Together”. We obtained PLN 13 million for Gdynia. The actions we planned were 100% innovative. We had to start from scratch: new social work organisation, new management structure and new staff. What is more, we developed and implemented new services that addressed the needs and reflected the resources available. Most of them are still in use today.

Following this project’s success, the changes in social policies were extended to other policy areas. On the one hand, we saw that MOPS are a great resource; on the other hand, we bore in mind that it carries a label of poverty and helplessness. We therefore began to consider social actions at the metropolitan level, out of their natural structures.

The first stage of Gdynia’s social innovations started with the decision to build a network of entities dealing with various topics in this area, so using the power of synergy to create a new, sustainable quality. We selected some leading issues that need to be strengthened and developed. One of them was to create a long-term policy that would bring about a real change in the lives of the elderly.

The idea of adding value to social innovations at the municipal level raised a question: which entity should be responsible for its implementation? From the beginning, we have consistently assumed that a team must be created and its members should have the appropriate skills. The team’s task was hence to strengthen links between, entities, institutions and leaders in social innovations.

The Social Innovations Department was established in the Science and Technology Park in Gdynia.

The new model of operation started from social economy, then the regeneration of the area in between Opata Hackiego and Zamenhofska in Chylonia streets were added. After some time, we also added a Citizens Budget.

We have done some research, for example with a citizens' panel. Wymiennikownia, that is a space by young people for young people, was also created. In March 2016, the Social Innovations Lab was detached from the PPNT (Pomeranian Science and Technology Park Gdynia).

In my opinion, time for building up relations, permission granted to sometimes unrealistic ideas and patience and tolerance for diversity were essential in our thinking about innovation.

Trust in the group that unleashed the storm was crucial. The courage of decision makers was key as was the space for discussion: to sit down and thoroughly chew over all the pros and cons. We had to learn how to talk about innovation in a way that would encourage others to listen and participate. The story of innovation also includes overcoming fears and showing that a move to uncharted waters still allows for building relationships in which all participants can feel safe.



ALEKSANDRA MARKOWSKA

Director of Social Innovations Lab

Thinking about social innovations in Gdynia and a particular place in which they should be developed results from the local government's conviction that social innovations should forge links between the world of business, modern technologies, citizens and various grassroots movements. Hence the choice of the Science and Technology Park in Gdynia.

We devoted a lot of time to taking the decision whether to call it a social innovations department or a centre. We chose the word 'module'. It seemed very adequate as it reflected the fact that each municipal unit has innovative potential. The networking idea brought up the proposal to look for people with creative potential in various places and jointly generate the power for change. From the beginning, we acted in close cooperation with partners across the city.

There was a moment of reflection on how to plan the space we were given for future workshops or meetings.

We were thinking about a coffee bar club but the idea evolved towards a Social Innovations Lab (Laboratorium Innowacji Społecznych, LIS) - a space co-designed by citizens for citizens, for events that would boost and engage Gdynians' creative potential. This is backed by the idea that citizens are the experts in the life of their city and their neighbourhood.

We have recently initiated something upon which we were working very hard with our partners, and that is our social innovation incubator – the idea of how to test, implement and skilfully support fresh initiatives.

Another huge challenge we face is Gdynia ReNewed itself in terms of a long-term programme of regeneration changes. The implementation phase will bring together municipal units, NGOs and citizens.

The LIS team people are charismatic and have the courage of social activists who are not afraid of challenges and are socially responsive. They are open and respect the opinions of different groups of citizens. In a way, each of us is a creator, both a largely self-reliant person but also fully accountable for our creations



Social Innovations Incubator in Gdynia



AN EVER-INCREASING NUMBER OF SENIOR CITIZENS, AS WELL AS THE VOICE OF DEPENDANT PERSONS AND THEIR CARERS GETTING STRONGER, BOTH MOTIVATED US TO LOOK MORE CLOSELY AT THEIR NEEDS. SKILLFUL DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SOLUTIONS IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF THESE PEOPLE BECOMES CRUCIAL. THIS IS WHAT THE SOCIAL INNOVATIONS INCUBATOR IS FOR. IT IS BEING ESTABLISHED AS A PART OF A NATIONAL PROJECT IN PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN GDYNIA AND WARSAW.

- Dependency on another person could be related to health issues, age or both. Our message and encouragement to search for innovations is aimed at everyone involved with these issues - says [Katarzyna Ziemann](#), Deputy Director of Social Innovations Lab in Gdynia and the coordinator of the project on behalf of Gdynia. These could be closest members of the family, NGOs, institutions or informal groups, as well as people who dedicated themselves to working in this area. Each of

them can innovate and make care even more effective. First and foremost, they will contribute to giving dependant people - regardless of their health - a chance to take advantage of the bigger part of the offer, move within the city more comfortably and safely, and participate in social life, as well as gaining better access to information, communicate more swiftly, and establish relationships more easily.

The project outlined the areas of everyday activity that the submitted innovative ideas may address. They are related to providing care and they support engagement in social life, activating and facilitating access to available services, while increasing the feeling of agency and decision-making abilities despite the reasons for dependency.

What is important is that the Social Innovation Incubator does not focus on solutions requiring modern technologies or complicated management structures. First and foremost, we want simple ideas obtained in three calls. Their implementation should improve the quality of life of dependent persons and their environment.

Incubation under the watchful eye of project experts enables the improvement and the development of ideas. After the testing period is over, the ideas are promoted and put into action.

PLN 3 m

The value of the Social Innovations Incubator project

- In the incubator, we want to think comprehensively and do not discriminate against any group of people - Katarzyna Ziemann emphasises. - Our goal is to create a space for innovators to exchange experiences, knowledge and ideas from different real-life situations. Already the first call attracted projects on both age and disability. For example, senior citizens dedicated city facilities that can be useful to wheelchair users. Even pavements with access ramps or benches located at a particular distance from each other improve the comfort of life for both groups of citizens. For example the code of understanding of people with learning disability could also become a framework to tackle age-related stereotypes.

“Social Innovation Incubator - Bespoke Innovations for Developing Micro Innovations in Care Services for Dependant Persons” is a project led by the Unit for Social Innovation and Research ‘Shipyard’ from Warsaw, in partnership with: The City of Gdynia (Social Innovations Lab and the Municipal Social Services Centre), the Capital City of Warsaw and Ecorys. The aim of this project is to look for solutions in the form of products, services and processes that improve the quality of life and facilitate dependant people’s care, as well as support providers of care.

More at: innowacjespoleczne.org.pl

- Maybe somebody could think about creating a tool that would facilitate inter-generational relations.
- Katarzyna Ziemann wonders. - Such meetings can bring a lot of good. One example might be study walks. When young volunteers met with senior citizens both groups realise how valuable they are to each other.



Let's Talk, a Few Remarks about a Dialogue with Senior Citizens in Gdynia



ALMOST A THOUSAND PEOPLE TOOK PART IN GDYNIA'S DIALOGUE ABOUT CARE SERVICES. NEARLY 500 CITIZENS PARTICIPATED IN A CITIZENS' PANEL & THE INFORMATION COLLECTED IN THIS WAY ALLOWS AN OFFER TO BE TAILORED TO THE EXACT NEEDS OF GDYNIA'S SENIOR CITIZENS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

It has been 8 years since Gdynia began to work on standardising care services. An important part of this process was social consultation carried out in 2010–2011.

Katarzyna Stec, the deputy director of the Municipal Social Services Centre in Gdynia says: "The key to this process was the fact that we did not study the quality of the provided social services. Because we wanted to build new quality, we asked the stakeholders what they believe a good social service to be."

Stakeholders were receivers of these services, both current and future, so they are also people who are still active and autonomous. Family members were also asked about their opinions, as well as other engaged people

such as carers and volunteers. Providers and deliverers of services also expressed their views, among them social workers, service coordinators and representatives of MOPS (Municipal Social Services Centre in Gdynia), as well as local authorities and service-providing entities.

We tried to guarantee the possibility of free and secure expression to each person participating in the dialogue. MOPS visited all those who were not able to participate in any of the 18 sessions.

We trained our volunteers - senior citizens from the Senior Citizens Activity Centre in Gdynia – to carry out interviews. We wanted interviewers and interviewees to find common ground quickly. As **Katarzyna Stec** explains: "It was also important to us to "confront" the interests of various groups. This allowed us, among other things, to define sensitive areas in providing care services, such as for example: safety of both the receiver and the provider of services."

During an almost half-year-long process, we established common quality criteria for care services; as a result, the service quality chart was drawn up. The next step was to develop the "Gdynia's standard of home care services", a catalogue of rights and obligations of all the stakeholders engaged in the service. (*more about this can be found on pages 27–28*)

- The entire process of the dialogue made it easier for us to talk about care in our city, emphasises **Katarzyna Stec**. Each of the sides could speak about their vision of a good service but could also listen to other participants of the dialogue.

- Although "Gdynia's standard of care services" is already 6 years old, it is not a dead piece of paper. As **Marek Szymański** from MOPS in Gdynia emphasises: "It is regularly reviewed and updated, the last time in 2016, to make it fit real life. The guardian of its relevance and application is the Centre of Care Services, a unit of MOPS in Gdynia. We will base the consultations of Gdynia's inter-generational policy, which will take place in 2017, on the developed model of dialogue about services.

The talks about the quality of care services started a broad dialogue with senior citizens of Gdynia. In 2013, a Citizens' Panel was convened.

- We decided to set up the panel, because we wanted to learn more about the lives and needs of Gdynians aged 55+. [Katarzyna Ziemann](#) from the Social Innovations Lab explains: "We carried out the study in a broad partnership with institutions and organisations from the city, we reached 456 respondents."

The most important result from the panel is the picture of senior citizens in Gdynia. We collected data on how deeply rooted people are in Gdynia, their activities and education, evaluation of the state of their finances and health, as well as their perceived degree of self-reliance and safety. The study also checked citizens' opinions about public space. The panel hence learnt more about the needs of various subgroups of senior citizens; for example, those with specific disabilities.

- In 2014, we returned to all participants of the panel with a short report on the changes introduced following the results of the study. As [Katarzyna Ziemann](#) recalls: "They learnt, for example, how many more new benches or bus stops were installed and that "Ratusz", a free weekly information bulletin from the city hall, increased its circulation by a few thousand copies. Gdynia's accessibility standard was introduced into the public design process."

As a part of the dialogue with senior citizens, study walks were also introduced, during which senior citizens evaluated public space, pointing out friendly solutions as well as the hurdles they face in their everyday lives. The remarks that senior citizens made were passed on to representatives of various city units with a recommendation to take them into account while planning their next steps. For example, this approach materialised in bus stop shelters being designed jointly by senior citizens and professionals from Gdynia's Design Centre.

Half of the 500-strong respondents group aged 55+ in the Citizens' Panel was chosen at random, the other half by purposeful sampling. The random sample took into account sex, age and place of living, whereas the purposeful sampling also took account of the type of disability.

The survey included 30 substantive questions and 4 socio-demographic questions. The former addressed the general perception of the neighbourhood in which the respondents live (mostly the organisation of public space and public transport), suggestions of how to make the city friendlier and provide information about what the city is offering for senior citizens, including activities and care.

"GDYNIA'S DIALOGUE ABOUT THE QUALITY OF CARE SERVICES" WAS CARRIED OUT UNDER THE BANNER: "WE WANT TO SEE IT! WE WANT TO HEAR IT! WE WANT TO DECIDE TOGETHER!"

The questions did not contain any professional terms and they were easy to interpret. They were universal and referred to all the stakeholder groups:

- **What do you find important/valuable in care service?**
- **What do you find important when having contact with the other person when a care service is being provided?**
- **What does a care service mean to you?**

Attention was also drawn to the ethical and legal aspects of care actions, such as the protection of data privacy and the confidentiality and security of expressing opinions, especially when referring to the relation between a care receiver and a care provider or an employee and an employer.

Two focus studies on the city's activity offer and support and care offer were also conducted. A group of 55+ citizens was invited to take part in the first one, while the second involved carers of dependent seniors who use home care services and day care centres.

This part of the dialogue resulted in recommendations for enriching the city's offer and improving the accessibility of information about it, as well as providing a chance to exchange knowledge and experience amongst carers.



Friendly and sentimental districts of the city

SHOPS THAT ARE NO LONGER THERE. NEIGHBOURS YOU CAN ALWAYS COUNT ON. PLACES THAT BRING BACK PRECIOUS MEMORIES. SENIOR CITIZENS OF GDYNIA WERE AMONG THE PEOPLE WHO HELPED TO CREATE SENTIMENTAL MAPS OF THE DISTRICTS OF GDYNIA THAT PARTICIPATE IN THE COMMUNAL REGENERATION PROGRAMME. THEY ALSO TOOK PART IN STUDY WALKS THAT HAVE HELPED TO EVALUATE PUBLIC SPACE.

By regenerating the districts in Gdynia, not only do we want to improve the quality of life, but also keep and highlight what is important to people who live there. This is where the idea of creating four sentimental maps of Oksywie, Witomino, Chylonia and Babie Doły has originated. Each of them contain of places that are important to the people of Gdynia, those which are no longer there or have changed, as well as being the hallmarks of each district. Traditional photos are replaced with special graphics and instead of descriptions, you can find personal stories told by citizens there. For example: *“At the former military stadium, the Orkan football club played its games. My father who was in the army enjoyed going there with his mates. We placed the goals on touchlines opposite each other and we played a game. The Grom cinema was just around the corner; it is also a very important place. Nobody is allowed inside these days. I can see the stadium from my window and it feels strange to see it is so empty”.*

Senior citizens from the Saint Michael Association and from the Citizen Activation Centre run by the Foundation for Social Change “Kreatywni” also shared their moving stories: *“Me and my next door neighbours are like a family. They will take care of my dog if it is needed; we meet during Christmas or drink a glass of champagne at New Year’s Eve. And this dates back to the very beginning. When I moved in I borrowed a key to the laundry from my neighbour. I told her it could take*

a while. And she said: ‘No worries. Take your time. It’s been 15 years already and I still haven’t return the key.’”

A sentimental map of their neighbourhood was also drawn by the senior citizens of Babie Doły and Witomino.

They also engaged in study walks during which they evaluated public space. They pointed out supportive solutions and architectural barriers amongst others. They also talked about social problems in their neighbourhood. Study walks took place at various times of the day - which had a huge impact on the perception of public space by the elderly. At those locations that demand more attention, pictures were taken and additional questions asked. Senior citizens drew attention to unfinished road surface replacements and dangerous pedestrian crossings. They praised the proximity of a forest as a nice direction for going on walks.

The cycle was supplemented by workshops during which reported problems were discussed in more detail. The entire exercise resulted in a report, the conclusions of which were included in the preparation of the regeneration programme.

Sentimental maps are available from 8.00 to 4.00 Monday to Friday at the Social Innovations Lab: Al. Zwycięstwa 96/98 (Pomeranian Science and Technology Park Gdynia, building IV).

The study walks method was inspired by a Warsaw-based Unit for Social Innovation and Research ‘Shipyard’ and used in Gdynia for the first time in 2012. The reported barriers have been put on an interactive map as NaprawmyTo (‘We’ll repair it’). The results were discussed at a city-wide gathering and the most important results were used to improve the public space in Gdynia. The walks along 13 different routes attracted 70 senior citizens and a dozen or so volunteers.



Gdynia ReNewed

SENIOR CITIZENS OF GDYNIA ENGAGED VERY ACTIVELY IN THE PREPARATIONS OF THE COMMUNAL REGENERATION PROGRAMME IN GDYNIA. THE ENGAGEMENT OF PEOPLE AGED 60+ MADE IT POSSIBLE TO EXPAND THE BOUNDARIES OF THE REGENERATION AREA AND SENTIMENTAL MAPS OF DIFFERENT DISTRICTS WERE ALSO DRAWN. THE DOCUMENT WILL INCLUDE DEMANDS FOR CHANGES REPORTED BY SENIOR CITIZENS DURING CONSULTATIONS.

The beginning of 2016 in Gdynia was marked by consultations on the boundaries of the regenerated area. Among the people who took part in meetings organised by the city was a significant number of senior citizens. They were interested in the proposed changes, asked detailed questions and shared their concerns and expectations. They exercised the right of every citizen to speak and added their comments on the planned boundaries of the revitalised area: the western part of Witomino - Radiostacja, Oksywie; and the area between Opata Hackiego and Zamenhofa streets in Chylonia and Pekin. As a result of their activities and efforts to change their nearest neighbourhood, two more areas were added to the programme: Babie Doły and Meksyk.

- In the three revitalised areas, local centres of social services will be created, according to [Aleksandra Markowska](#), Director of the Social Innovations Lab in Gdynia: "We hope that senior citizens will not only be at the receiving end but will also engage in creating the centres. We would like senior citizens, alongside other users, to make a significant contribution to making it happen. The engagement will make the places they talk about come alive. We do hope that a large part of the offer will be consumed by the people willing to share their passions and ideas."

Klub Seniora, located on Śmidowicza Street in Oksywie, will be one of the venues established because of revitalisation and will be aimed at people aged 60+. Its offer will be enjoyed by the citizens of the northern quarters of Gdynia. It will be located in a newly-established neighbourhood centre in a building owned by the city. This place used to house the School of Craft and



Trade (pictured). This venue has a large sports hall and a garden, which both add to its value.

"When talking to people, I often heard that the northern districts lack a place for senior citizens to spend time in, pursue their hobbies, or meet up", councillor [Elżbieta Sierżęga](#) notices.

In January 2016, the northern branch of the Seniors Club was opened. It offered intensive courses two days per week but, according to citizens, this was still not enough. The number of senior citizens has grown, so the need to expand the club's activities was huge. The City Council decided to offer some new space for senior citizens to spend time in and develop their art, sport or health-related interests all week long.

Centres of neighbourhood services will also open in Witomino and Chylonia. They will bring together culture, sport, social support and citizens' initiatives. The guests will also be the hosts of the venues.

GDYNIA
ODNOWA



Citizen, this budget is for you



WHEN AN UNEVEN PAVEMENT BOTHERS YOU OR YOU START DREAMING ABOUT AN OPEN-AIR GYM, YOU CAN TALK TO THE APPROPRIATE UNIT AT THE CITY HALL OR TAKE THE INITIATIVE YOURSELF AND PUT FORWARD A PROPOSAL TO THE CITIZENS' BUDGET. THIS SOLUTION IS SUCCESSFULLY AND WILLINGLY USED BY THE SENIOR CITIZENS OF GDYNIA.

Andrzej Szatkowski lives in Witomino-Leśniczówka at ul. Krótka. For years, every one of his attempts to drive through the crossing with Pasieczna Street was a real challenge. Not only is the visibility poor but there is also a large number of parked vehicles.

- "Everyone complained how bad it is but they did nothing", this resident of Gdynia says. "Eventually, I decided that something must be done. At first, I considered dealing with it through the Transport Department at the City Hall, but then I had an idea that as we have the Citizens' Budget it could work out this way."

At a briefing organised by Social Innovations Lab, he inquired about the details of procedures and then he sprang into action. He gathered the required signatures for his project to place a mirror at the crossroads and he submitted it under the title: "Improving safety and traffic flow at the crossroads of Pasieczna and Krótka" to the 2nd edition of Citizens' Budget (2015)." He won!

"At the voting time, I prepared some leaflets and put them into my neighbours' letter-boxes. It was important stuff so I didn't have to encourage people a lot to vote for it," he admits. "Since the mirror is in place, driving through the crossroads has become much easier. And it is safer."

So far, three editions of Gdynia's Citizens' Budget have taken place. The total number of submitted project is 717. 544 were voted on and 111 were given a green light. The turnout was about 20 per cent. The amount of resources allocated to the Citizens Budget has thus grown systematically: in 2016, it was PLN 5,203,543.65.

The Citizens' Budget in Gdynia mostly covers ideas on how to change the public space. Therefore, the participation of senior citizens is very important as they are especially in need of it as **Aleksandra Markowska**, Director of the Social Innovations Lab in Gdynia, notes: "They spend there a lot of time and have concrete expectations. Their interest is connected with the fact that when we age uneven pavements or too high steps become a real issue. During study walks senior citizens emphasised the need to allocate green zones, areas of natural relaxation, to the city. And they also very often request an open-air gym to be created within the Citizens' Budget."

The selection process in the Gdynia's Citizens' Budget takes place online at bo.gdynia.pl. To make voting easier for people with no access to the internet or those who do not feel comfortable with computers, specially trained volunteers visit Senior Citizens Activity Centre and seniors' clubs. They explain the rules, and help to navigate the website where the projects can be selected. In this way, the information on Citizens' Budget reaches a few hundreds of people every year.

You can find all information about the Citizens' Budget at: bo.gdynia.pl.

The coordinating unit is the Social Innovations Lab located at Al. Zwycięstwa 96/98 (the building marked IVA of the Pomeranian Science and Technology Park in Gdynia), phone no. 58 698 23 05.

Active Senior Citizens at the Heart

TABLES FOR FOUR ARE ALWAYS TAKEN. THERE IS COFFEE, COOKIES AND NEEDLEWORK, CROSSWORDS, PAPERS... THE BUZZ OF CONVERSATION CAN BE HEARD EVERYWHERE. FROM TIME TO TIME, THE COFFEE BAR TURNS INTO A DANCING FLOOR, A CONCERT HALL OR AN ART GALLERY AND BEHIND THE WALL, PEOPLE ARE VERY FOCUSED AS THE LECTURES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE ARE UNDER WAY. WELCOME TO THE SENIOR CITIZENS ACTIVITY CENTRE!

In the last month of 2016, the offices of the Senior Citizens Activity Centre at ul. 3 Maja were refurbished. Since the 1st of December, the "Gdynia Senior Plus" card has been issued here; hence a part of the coffee bar was allocated to this purpose. There is a queue to reach each of the tables where the forms may be submitted. If somebody still has to finish their application, he or she finds a free place and writes down all the required information. When the formalities are completed, coffees and cookies are ordered (they cost PLN 2) and groups of friends sit down together around a table for something of a pleasant chat. A large group of senior citizens comes here for company. They do not take part in hobby courses as for them a conversation with another human being is most important. When you can laugh together or sometimes complain or even cry a bit. The social role played by CAS cannot be overvalued.

For those who want to develop their interests and passions in a group, there is a wide range to choose from: painting, gym, games and visage, to name just a few. Meetings about health prevention, safety or lifestyles are organised here, as well as courses on how to cope with bereavement. The offer addresses the needs and expectations reported by senior citizens.

What more? An internet café. The equipment is available during CAS opening times and there are always people willing to use it.

If that is not enough, then they can enroll at the University of the Third Age in Gdynia (GUTW). You will not find such offer in any other place in Poland: 58 courses and more than 120 groups attending them. CAS offices cannot house all students so lectures also take place in the nearby House of Craft, the School of Social Communication and at a local parish. The most popular courses include music, psychology, as well as medicine and history (of Pomerania, Gdynia, women, fashion). There are both lectures and seminars, the later in groups of 15 people. There is a three-year long cycle and new courses are added every year. The new arrivals in 2016–2017 were Aviation and the History of Women.

98

is the age of oldest student at the University of the Third Age in Gdynia. She participates in classes at the GUTW branch in a co-op seniors' club in Witomino.

The tuition fee is PLN 30 per semester. Each student can sign up to up to three lectures or seminars. Language and IT courses are also on offer (PLN 40 per semester).

In addition, students can also take part in trips organised by lecturers.

The Senior Citizens Activity Centre runs 5 out of 29 seniors' clubs in different city quarters. In 2017, two more clubs will open, in Oksywie and Karwiny, both will naturally be tailored to the local needs of senior citizens.

CAS also organises a competition called "Free time management Gdynia 55+" that supports the activities of the remaining 24 seniors' clubs run by charities. They also provide financial support for sport activities for people under 60 who cannot yet enjoy the CAS services. It is to show younger pensioners how to spend their time in an

interesting way when they retire. The 55+ programme proved to be successful, as about 5,000 people take part in it. Each senior citizen takes part on an average of two trips a year: culture-related events (with financial support from the city budget), socialising meetings or festive galas.



BOŻENA ZGLIŃSKA

Director of the Senior Activities Centre

“It was 2004 when the city development strategy was discussed. The figures showed us that the number of people aged 60 and older soared. Somebody had an idea to prepare an activation offer for this group of residents, improve the conditions of ageing and spend free time effectively. Education came first. The University of the Third Age was established and the city entrusted its running to the YMCA. It turned out to be a huge success and many people wanted to enroll.

In May 2005, the Senior Citizens Activity Centre was established as a municipal unit coordinating all senior citizens-related enterprises in Gdynia. At first, the Centre was located in Chylonia at ul. Wawrzyniaka. The intention, however, was to make the main offices of CAS as easily accessible as possible from other parts of Gdynia. So a year later CAS moved to ul. 3 Maja in the city centre. The first senior citizens’ club in the city remained in Chylonia.

Since 2007 when I was appointed the CAS director, I have been engaged in integrating groups of senior citizens in Gdynia. Thanks to the cooperation with many institutions, NGOs and creative senior citizens our activities have expanded significantly.

In 2004, 800 people took advantage of our offer and today the University of the Third Age has 2,000 students. Nowadays, the Senior Citizens Activity Centre has more than 10,000 active members.

The challenge still stands: how to encourage those senior citizens who still stay at home to come

out and fulfil their dreams? Each of our senior citizens is different. Age and education do not matter, it is all about personal aspirations and the fact that when you retire you finally have time to develop your passions. It is also a good moment to fulfill your dreams. It gives huge satisfaction to senior citizens and us.

There is a large group of people who have been with us from the beginning. Some of them are 80 or 90 years old but still find something for themselves in our broad educational, sport and cultural offer.

We keenly watch how our courses change the people and their relationships at home.”



BEATA PODLASEK

Lecturer at the University of the Third Age in Gdynia

“I have been conducting courses at the University of the Third Age for 7 years. I am still fascinated by the fact that lectures have a multitude of meaning for our students. Many finally have time to explore the topics they are interested in; they can try their hand at many types of art. Our offer is rich - one of the richest in the country.

The University allows its students to stand up to the greatest enemy of humanity; namely loneliness. Diligence, responsiveness to one another and friendships formed here among GUTW students are exceptional. All the time, I admire wonderful relations between students and this huge desire to be together. Sometimes, people come here despite their health issues, despite the suffering. I can very often hear that the days with classes are the best in their week. I am really glad that there are more and more students at our university; for so many people this is the most important place in Gdynia. It is a great honour to be able to work here.”

**URSZULA BEDRIJ**

GUTW student

“Two years ago, I enrolled on a course about the European Union. It was run by a young woman who used to work in Brussels. She decided to write a PhD thesis on this and came to share her knowledge with us. During the first lecture we not only introduced ourselves with our names and surnames. We also told one another what we did in our professional life. I was pleasantly surprised.

I think that a part of GUTW’s popularity is due to the fact that young people also volunteer here. It is good that this place brings generations together. During the Christmas season, we help to wrap food parcels for those who need them. In summer, CAS organises classes for grandparents and grandchildren.”

**MARLENA GRZESIAK**

GUTW student

“I have been coming here from the beginning, I remember GUTW classes run by the YMCA. I enrolled for some specific courses: Opera, Classical Music and Symbols in the Bible. Today, I do not even remember how many lectures I attend because I am an auditing student.

At first I was a bit blocked, a bit shy perhaps. So I joined a theatre group because I thought this would help me to overcome my embarrassment. And today I can see that my embarrassment has dissipated.

I come to CAS every day. Nice and really interesting people come here. I order a small coffee, read through my notes and prepare myself for lectures. Five years ago

I found some information in the papers about Professor Halina Szwarz who established the first University of the Third Age in Poland. I wrote an article about her and, thanks to our director, it was published.

This was a kind of ‘thank you’ from me to the Professor for the fact that we have our university today.”

**MARIA RYMARZ**

GUTW student

“When I exchanged an intimate Sopot for a modern Gdynia, ending my professional career and staying at home seemed like being dragged to a side track in a foreign country. I welcomed with great enthusiasm the information about establishing GUTW and I have been its student since the very first day. It is a fascinating scene of life! For more than 12 years, I have been meeting new people and making new acquaintances in non-compulsory groups during discussions at breaks. I forge new friendships and the detachment disappears. In your age group, you do not feel the burden of all those years and we remember what is written on our ID cards is only for official purposes. We are carried along with happiness of fulfilling the passions and interests we have postponed. City and university authorities cater for our dreams; they are always open to our needs, suggestions and proposals. They create an atmosphere of safety and friendly interest. We have wonderful teachers and lecturers who with great and contagious passion share with us their knowledge, inspire us, and discover our hidden passions and talents. Interesting ideas are born here; for example, Gdynia’s Spelling Contest is now inter-generational.

I cannot imagine my life without GUTW, without all that is given to me (to us) by our city. My beautiful, smiling place on Earth - my little homeland, Gdynia.”

THE OFFER FOR SENIOR CITIZENS FROM GDYNIA IS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT::

- Seniorplus.gdynia.pl or
- on our Facebook profile facebook.com/seniorplus

An Ace up One's Sleeve - the Senior Plus Card

IN THE FIRST MONTH ALONE, 3100 "GDYNIA SENIOR PLUS" CARDS WERE ISSUED. THE PROGRAMME ALLOWS PEOPLE AGED 60+ TO USE SALES AND OFFERS PREPARED SPECIALLY FOR THEM.

"We have already been running senior citizens policy for 12 years and we were the first in Poland to approach this policy-making in such a comprehensive way. Now it is time to move a step further with the launch of "Gdynia Senior Plus" card. I hope it will be widely welcomed by our senior citizens," said **Michał Guć**, Deputy Mayor of Gdynia in charge of innovations during a meeting of the City Council when the councillors decided to launch a new system of discounts for residents aged 60+.

I also hope that in the first few days after the launch, the card will already be used by thousands of people. From 1st of December 2016, queues were forming in the Senior Citizens Activity Centre by residents interested in getting the card.

"It is very easy to obtain the card", **Bożena Zglińska**, the CAS director, assures us: "You have to complete a short application. The card is issued immediately after we have verified the data, such as age and address. Each card has a number, and the name and surname of its holder. It is valid only together with its holder's ID card.

To be eligible to obtain the card, you must live in Gdynia and be at least 60 years old. Cards are valid for an indefinite period. The first card is issued free of charge, but to obtain a duplicate you must pay PLN 20.

A card holder is entitled to use discounts and special sales offers provided by the partners of "Gdynia Senior Plus" card. Among them are public institutions, NGOs and Gdynia's businesses.

"Gdynia Senior Plus" card in on the one hand an element of support for senior citizens of Gdynia in each area of their life, and, on the other, an encouragement

to get active and participate in the life of the city to the full.

In 2010, Gdynia launched senior-friendly places with the project: "The Space in Gdynia for Senior Citizens". The doors of shops, service outlets, eating places, clubs and organisation opened with special offers awaiting elder residents to go outside their homes.

The collaboration programme involved 30 partners and was widely welcomed by senior citizens. The rising satisfaction and increasing needs of senior citizens justified the expansion of favourable conditions to improve the quality of peoples' lives and develop their creativity. This took place in 2016.

The introduction of the card enables more people aged 60+ to join the 10,000 active senior residents of Gdynia.

To collect the "Gdynia Senior Plus" card, please go to Senior Citizens Activity Centre (Centrum Aktywności Seniora) located at 3 Maja 27 in Gdynia. It is open Monday to Friday from 9.30 to 4.00. Please bring your ID with you. You can call them at: 58 698 55 38.

**TU HONORUJEMY
KARTĘ SENIORA**



Places that accept the card are marked with a dedicated sticker.

Partners of the "Gdynia Senior Plus" card include Gdynia's theatres, museums, cafes, restaurants, hairdressers and beauty salons, sport clubs, shops and doctors.

The full list is available at: seniorplus.gdynia.pl

Move it, Move it! Gdynia in Motion - Physical Activities for Senior Citizens



WHEN THE STAFF OF GDYNIA'S SPORTS CENTRE ANALYSED THE AGE OF PEOPLE PARTICIPATING IN FREE SPORTS CLASSES ORGANISED UNDER THE BANNER OF "GDYNIA IN MOTION". IT TURNED OUT THAT THE LARGEST GROUP ARE SENIOR CITIZENS. REACTING TO THIS COMMITMENT A SPECIAL SERIES OF CLASSES WAS ORGANISED FOR THEM.

Fitness, Yoga, Pilates, Zumba and Nordic Walking - these are free of charge for senior citizens as a part of "Gdynia in Motion for Senior Citizens". We must admit that year on year they have become ever keener on it. Fitness classes are attended by 98 people on average, including Yoga - 45, Pilates and Zumba - 35. In addition, 40 people take part in the Nordic Walking walks. What is important is that the intensity of training is adjusted to participants. The classes are held once a week.

Once a year, GCS invites people to attend an Active Senior Citizens' Day as part of the celebrations for Grandparents Day. The 2017 edition is the third in a row. The

programme's offer is very wide. Apart from well-known physical activities, senior citizens can come to a game zone where table tennis or table football is available as well as hot tea or coffee. Free routine check-ups are provided to monitor senior citizens' health, as well as consultations on healthy eating habits.

Gdynia's Sports Centre is an international partner of the project funded by the EU programme Erasmus+ called "MEMTRAIN: Memory Training for Older Adults (55+) Linking Physical Exercise and Brain Training to Promote Healthy Ageing" that combines physical exercises and brain training, while promoting healthy ageing. The enterprise was launched on 1st October 2016 and will carry on until 30th September 2018. Its aim is to show practical application of research results, indicating that physical activity and memory training slows brain degeneration of people aged 55+. Knowledge and experiences are being shared by professional instructors, memory coaches, scientists and psychologists, as well as safe sport professionals. As a result, a textbook will be produced and used to promote healthy ageing, especially among people aged 55+.

The project partners include: Czech Republic, Slovenia, Poland, Spain, Ireland and Italy.

More can be found in Polish at gdyniasport.pl - under "Gdynskie Poruszenie"



It feels like home here



IT IS A PLACE PRESCHOOL CHILDREN VISIT VERY OFTEN, A PLACE WHERE THE GREAT ORCHESTRA OF CHRISTMAS CHARITY FEELS AT HOME AND ITS GARDEN IS A PLACE FOR RELAXATION AND INTER-GENERATIONAL MEETINGS. HERE SENIOR CITIZENS UNDERGO REHABILITATION UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYE OF PROFESSIONALS. THEY TAKE PART IN MEMORY TRAINING, SPEND THEIR TIME CHATTING AND PLAYING GAMES WHILE THE SMELL OF FRESHLY BAKED CAKE IS EVERYWHERE. THEY FEEL AT HOME THANKS TO THE DAY CARE CENTRE AT UL. MACZKA: SAFE, CALM AND LOVED.

The neighbourhood is rather quiet despite the proximity of a traffic artery. There are narrow streets at St. Maksymilian Hill and old tenements houses with well-kept green areas surrounding them. Between them there is a majestic building of the Day Care Centre at ul. Maczka with a spacious garden, rehabilitation and therapeutic rooms, as well as common rooms and a kitchen.

“67 of our patients are senior citizens, most of them have been diagnosed with dementia,” **Małgorzata Kępska**, the head of DDPS says. “We provide care time until 4pm, but there is also a lot going on in the afternoons. We pay huge attention to our senior citizens spending their time actively, to allow them to develop their skills and abilities in a group. Our patients make friends with one another, there were even some weddings.”

“Maczki”, as they are called in Gdynia, are famous for organising important events. Many take place outside the facility and are attended by senior citizens from across the province.

The collaboration with kindergartens under the banner of “Senior Citizens for Children” has been ongoing for years.

“Children from nearby nurseries no. 19 and 22 (Little Explorers) visit us a few times a year”, **Małgorzata Kępska** says: “The youngest school children from Pogórze come here, too. Four times a year students from Gdańsk perform a concert here as well.”

At the beginning of January 2017, little kids from the nursery at Hallera visited senior citizens and performed an hour and a half Nativity Play. They had a gift for each senior member of the audience: a cup made of wall paper and stuck to a blank piece of paper. Everybody received a different one! Each cup was stuck to the paper in such a way that you could put a winter teabag inside it. On the reverse, there was a photo of the group of children that performed in the Nativity Play. On the other hand, senior citizens visit children to read stories together. Each visit has its own theme, so children should prepare for it. It is a one-and-a-half-hour play full of playing, contests and creating bonds.

“Not, all children have their grannies and grandpas at hand. I can see how they hug our seniors and I am in no doubt that such a contact is very important”, **Małgorzata Kępska** emphasises: “When children come to our centre, we always spoil them a bit, as grandpas and grandmas do...”

The programme also includes visits on Grandmother and Grandfather Days. Children bring big hand-made greeting cards.

For ten years, DDPS has been organising Miss and Mister Senior contests. It started with the residents of Gdynia, but over time people have started to attend from across the province. The first contest took place in the building at Maczka. The following events, where as many as 200 people gathered, took place in the Community Centre at Ulica Łowicka and the Grom cinema in Oksywie. Each contest had a theme like folk costumes or the Olympics, for example. Participants dressed appropriately for the occasion, competing in thematic contests.

For years, we have organised Nativity plays for seniors from across the province.

From the beginning of the Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity, one of its centres has been located at Maczki and so it was on the 15th January 2017. As with every year, the preparations started in October. Every effort was focused on making sure everything was perfectly ready for 8.00 o'clock on Sunday morning. Auctions took place throughout the day and our staff served baked cakes at the coffee bar. There were concerts and plays featuring children and senior citizens from local clubs and other individuals.

In May 2017, the 10th edition of a poetry contest will take place. Every senior citizen of Trójmiasto may take part. The only requirement is to submit your three poems on a given subject. The jury is presided over by Halina Dobrowolska, a Polish language teacher from the upper secondary school no. 6 in Gdynia. Poems are also rated by poets from younger generations.

Everyday classes in Day Care Centre are divided into 6 groups, each with no more than 12 participants, depending on their level of advancement. Their health is under constant monitoring by a psychologist and a team analysis of all activities. As a result, a decision is taken as to whether the classes or groups should be reorganised because it may be that someone no longer feels comfortable in one group due to his or her health. However, the move to another group is smooth, sometimes taking place after only a few minutes.

At the beginning of 2017, a supporting carer was introduced to each group. There are hence plans to organise "memory and music classes" to reach people's memories through music. New facilities will also be added to the garden. For years, there has already been an open-air gym, but now a sensorial garden is being designed. Dedicated stations will help senior citizens to acquaintance themselves with plants using all their senses.

Dzienny Dom Pomocy Społecznej (Day Care Centre)

ul. Gen. Maczka 1, 81-417 Gdynia

Phone no. 58 698 24 24.

email: ddps@mopsgdynia.pl

The centre specialises in care for Alzheimer patients. Day care for dementia patients is also provided by Community Selfhelp Centre at ul. Wąsowicza 3 in Gdynia.

"The emotions released by the poetry are best measured by the number of tissues used", Małgorzata Kępska says with a smile. The audience will be packed with entire families and it may be that this is the first time they see their parents or grandparents in such roles.

A "Familiada" organised every year provides a chance for a inter-generational meet-ups. May 2017 will see the organisation of the 10th edition. For 5 hours, there will be contests and games – both indoors and outdoors - to integrate three generations. The Familiada Day at Maczki is also a day of open doors; everybody can come and have a look at what is happening in here, touring all the rooms and talking to the staff.

In the afternoons on Mondays and Tuesdays, meetings under the banner: "We bring generations together" take place. Club members are keen to engage in various activities in the centre and our patients are eager to integrate with club members. As Małgorzata Kępska emphasises, "We go out together to the theatre or cinema. In 2016, we took part in a few meetings in the Museum of the City of Gdynia. We also attended a New Year's party run by a senior DJ Wika."

The centre is also open for all senior citizens who seek company in being active. On each Tuesday and Thursday, free gym classes are run by rehabilitators employed by the DDPS. Participants can ask them what exercises to do at home to stay in good shape for longer.

On the last Tuesday of each month, there is a gathering of a support group for people who care for dependent elderly people on a daily basis. These three hours together give people struggling with similar problems a chance to meet as well as to talk to a specialist who can suggest solutions.



Brain in the gym

– about projects supporting memory processes

MEMO AND MEMORY GYM ARE TWO PROJECTS FOR COGNITIVE FUNCTION TRAINING IN SENIORS. THE FORMER PROJECT IS STILL IN PROGRESS AND IT FOCUSES ON DEVELOPING A MULTIMEDIA TOOL TO SUPPORT MEMORY PROCESSES AND ACTIVATE THE ELDERLY. THE LATTER ONE HAS BEEN COMPLETED AND IT OFFERS A NUMBER OF BRAIN EXERCISES AVAILABLE ONLINE, BOTH FOR SENIORS THEMSELVES AND THEIR CAREGIVERS.



MIROSŁAWA CUPER

Deputy Director of the Care Centre for the Chronically Ill in Bosmańska Street in Gdynia (on the left)

AGATA KOWALEWSKA

Director of the Centre for People with Special Needs in Wąsowicza Street in Gdynia (on the right)

Memory as such cannot be fixed, but a lot can be done to keep it in good condition for as long as possible. Next to the integration of seniors, this is one of the main tasks of the MEMO multimedia tool developed by the joint team of specialists from the Unit for Social Innovation and Research “Shipyard” in Warsaw, SWPS University and the EE Laboratory, along with two organisations from Gdynia, i.e. Laboratory of Social Innovation and Municipal Social Services Centre.

In the case of MEMO, it was first necessary to diagnose the needs of seniors in terms of their contact with other seniors, social relationships, leisure time activities and daily routines. A study was also carried out with respect to the caregivers’ point of view, the factors slowing down the ageing process and having a positive effect on memory, as well as examining the various methods of working with seniors.

Questions were asked about the form of the tool and its contents. The priority was to make it as user-friendly as possible and to develop exercises which would truly improve the memory function in the elderly, help them establish deeper social relationships and trigger their memories. To this end, the tool will offer the “Diary” application which could be used by the senior with the assistance of the caregiver. In the “Diary”, seniors will be able to add photographs and write their memoirs to which they can later refer to when telling stories of the past to their grandchildren.

“In the MEMO project, Gdynia is represented by a large number of people involved both in work with the elderly and on social innovation. While carrying out our study, we met seniors from different backgrounds”, says **Katarzyna Ziemann** from the Laboratory of Social Innovation. “Some of them were already suffering from dementia, while others were enjoying good health. For example, students of the University of the Third Age

who continue to work on their intellect, as they are aware that their memory is ageing too. We asked these people about their needs during highly individualised interviews carried out, for instance, in municipal support centres”, adds Ziemann.

Based on the study, four groups of possible MEMO users (personas or personality models) were defined.

The first one, “Krystyna Samodzielna” (“Autonomous Krystyna”), is an active senior who attends classes, meets friends and has good relations with her family.

Another one, “Danuta Domowa” (“Stay-At-Home Danuta”) is still fairly independent, but she spends a lot of time at home because she already has some health problems, doesn’t have many relationships outside her environment and doesn’t participate in the offer addressed to seniors.

The other personas are close relatives who take care of seniors at home and people whose profession is to work with seniors.

Based on this information, the tool prototypes were developed by the programmers in the EE Laboratory and tested with the seniors to see if MEMO was easy to operate and comprehensible to them. The team from the SWPS University is developing a set of exercises for MEMO.

While the work on MEMO is still ongoing, it is already possible to use *The Memory Gym*, a set of exercises available online in a traditional form. The Unit for Social Innovation and Research “Shipyard” in Warsaw is the leader of the project falling under the same title, with employees of social services institutions in Gdynia constituting the main experts.

“There are many memory games available on the market, but most of them are designed for children. Regardless of the fact whether they suffer from dementia or not, seniors are first and foremost adult people”, says **Mirosława Cuper**, Deputy Director of the Care Centre for the Chronically Ill in Gdynia, co-author of the materials for *The Memory Gym*. “These are people with a whole lifetime of experience, so they need to be constantly motivated, so that they don’t feel discouraged or bored.”

“Rather than being yet another textbook, *The Memory Gym* is a set of tools to work with seniors”, emphasises **Agata Kowalewska**, Director of the Centre for People with Special Needs in Wąsowicza Street in Gdynia, who has also worked on the tool. “The website silowniapamieci.pl offers example exercises divided into different categories. It is up to the therapist or caretaker to decide how to use these assignments. The level of difficulty can be modified according to the senior’s condition.”

Mirosława Cuper also points to another advantage: the online exercises are free of charge and may easily be printed out. Each of the 42 assignments comes with a description and possible scenarios regarding the level of difficulty, number of participants per task and

task duration. Additional information is provided on cognitive functions stimulated by the respective exercises.

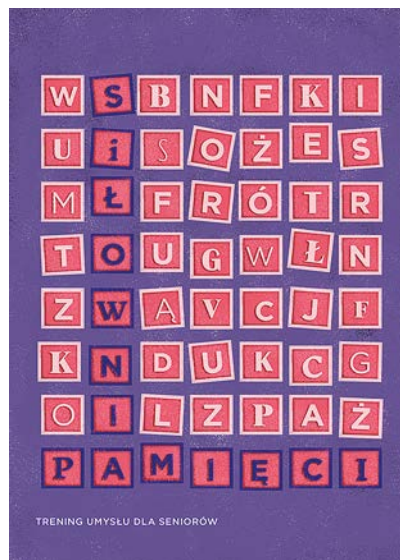
“Memory training is an element of general mind training”, says **Mirosława Cuper**. “We also have exercises to work on attention span, concentration and understanding, to stimulate logical thinking and linguistic functions, and to improve visual and spatial coordination. *The Memory Gym* is a perfect source of materials for people working with seniors.”

As **Agata Kowalewska** says, “Responsible for a whole variety of functions, the mind will work properly only when it is properly stimulated. This means that both the exercises and their difficulty should be adapted to every person’s ability. They can’t be too difficult, so as not to discourage the user, but neither can they be too easy because then they produce no impact. Crosswords are a good example here. They help us train our mind, but if we stick to the same level of difficulty we develop certain patterns which don’t contribute to our mental development anymore.”

On 12 December 2016, a seminar was held in the Pomeranian Science and Technology Park in Gdynia (PPNT Gdynia) to summarise the project. As an added value, the project provided an opportunity for practitioners to meet and to present original solutions, compare results and exchange experiences.

IMPORTANT ADDRESSES:

- www.projektmemo.pl
- www.silowniapamieci.pl



Gdynia Council for Senior Citizens

FOUNDED IN 2004, AS THE FIRST OF ITS KIND IN POLAND, THE GDYNIA COUNCIL FOR SENIOR CITIZENS, PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS THE COUNCIL OF GDYNIA SENIORS, HAS INSPIRED A NUMBER OF IDEAS, INCLUDING THE PLACEMENT OF THE CENTRAL HEADQUARTERS OF THE SENIOR ACTIVITY CENTRE IN A PRESTIGIOUS PART OF GDYNIA. A LOT MAY HAVE CHANGED OVER THE YEARS, BUT THE COUNCIL STILL HAS THE SAME GOAL: CARING FOR THE INTERESTS OF GDYNIA CITIZENS AGED 60+.

Jacek Szpakowski was one of the founding fathers of the Council of Gdynia Seniors. At that time, no such institution existed in Poland, so there was no example to follow. He says, "I worked at the Gdynia Centre for NGOs and I knew them all inside out, including the ones dealing with senior citizens. After several years of work at the City Hall I received a proposal to take up senior affairs in Gdynia. I didn't hesitate and accepted the offer."

One of the first things he did was to list all the organisations in Gdynia working for senior citizens. In 2004 alone, there were 42 of them! When the representatives of all of them met in the City Hall, they decided to set up a council.

"It was my idea", admits **Jacek Szpakowski**. "I knew this community and I was convinced that it was necessary to convene a group that would represent senior citizens."

With **Jacek Szpakowski** as its president, the council of nine members was appointed by the President of Gdynia on 22nd June 2004.

"The original Council was made up of people from different organisations working with seniors. With time, we began to realise that rather than serving as an external advisory body, the Council should bring together those in charge of the city policy for senior citizens", recalls **Michał Guć**, Vice-President of the City of Gdynia responsible for innovations, and the current President of the Gdynia Council for Senior Citizens. "The formula was changed and the Council now operates in its new form which enables direct information flow between the city representatives and senior communities."



JACEK SZPAKOWSKI

Co-creator of the Council of Gdynia Seniors

Nowadays, the Council has 13 members and includes representatives of the President of the City of Gdynia (including those from the Municipal Social Services Centre and Senior Activity Centre), as well as people appointed by local communities and organisations acting for senior citizens. During their two-year term, the Council members meet at least once every three months. They discuss new ideas and take actions which translate into specific programmes for general support and the activation of senior citizens in Gdynia.

"One of the recently discussed issues were the standards that need to be ensured by senior citizens clubs applying for grants", says Vice-President **Michał Guć**. "The minimum requirements have been specified for the clubs, subsidised by the city in relation to the number of meetings per week or excursions that they organise."

Maria Rymarz, a member of the Council and a representative of the Student Government of the Gdynia University of the Third Age noted that: "Together, with Urszula Bedrij and Maria Stachyra, we bring up problems reported by our fellow students. People can come to us during our weekly office hours. There are approximately two thousand students and we want everyone to have a chance to speak. So far, our interventions have resulted in urban infrastructure improvements, for instance.

One of the initiatives of the Gdynia Council for Senior Citizens is the "Gdynia Senior Plus" Card.

As **Urszula Bedrij** says, "Some time ago we were wondering how to reach the seniors who are not very active. Someone came up with the idea of 'The Senior's Envelope', a package of basic information in case of an emergency, deposited in a local clinic or branch of the Social Insurance Institution (ZUS). Who knows, maybe we will succeed with this project too."

Best medical advice – Be One Step Ahead of Your Illness



GDYNIA WAS ONE OF THE FIRST MUNICIPALITIES IN POLAND TO INCLUDE PREVENTIVE CARE IN ITS AGENDA AS EARLY AS 1997. IN 2015, APPROX. PLN 500,000 WAS ALLOCATED TO HEALTH CARE PROGRAMMES DEDICATED EXCLUSIVELY TO SENIOR CITIZENS.

Health promotion and preventive care are among Gdynia's top priorities. For the past 20 years, the city authorities have organised several free programmes for all social groups, including senior citizens. These actions are of considerable importance, as nearly 30% of Gdynia's residents are over 60 years old.

"Our prevention programmes are addressed to people who are still independent and are aimed at helping them keep their autonomy", explains **Teresa Marzejon**, Head of the Health Department of the City Hall of Gdynia. "While working on them we think of health problems which might affect certain population groups."

Gdynia's flagship health promotion project is targeted at people aged 65 or older through the programme

"Stale sprawni" ("Forever Fit"). Applicants are first examined by a rehabilitation consultant who establishes their general condition and recommends activities. Exercises are performed with a physiotherapist, either individually or in a group. The programme improves seniors' physical health and integrates them by giving them a reason to get out of the house and meet friends.

Since 1998, the city has organised prostate cancer screening tests for men aged 50–70 years. This type of cancer very rarely displays symptoms before patients turn 50, with over half of them diagnosed only when they turn 70 years old. In total, 517 men got tested in the 2015 edition of the programme. Within the scope of the screening tests, the medical histories are collected and patients are given a physical exam. If necessary, they are referred to a urologist for a consultation.

All Gdynia's residents aged 45 or older have access to another healthcare programme offering screening tests for colorectal cancer. This is one of many programmes aimed at early diagnosis of illnesses typically observed in the elderly. Others include preventive assessment of the risk of osteoporotic fractures (addressed to people aged 50–59) and glaucoma (people aged 45–55).

For the past few years preventive care in Gdynia has also been provided by NGO partners. They offer various support programmes; for example, for people with dementia and their families and caregivers.

Further information on the healthcare programmes provided by the City of Gdynia may be found at: gdynia.pl/dlamieszkanow/zdrowie

When no one is around – remote care services as part of a social services package

A SPECIAL TELEPHONE, PERSONAL ALARM BUTTON AND 24/7 ACCESS TO THE EMERGENCY CALL CENTRE IS ALL YOU NEED TO INCLUDE SENIOR CITIZENS WHO LIVE ON THEIR OWN IN THE EMERGENCY HELP SYSTEM. A FEW YEARS AGO, GDYNIA WAS THE FIRST CITY IN POLAND TO ADD THE 24/7 REMOTE CARE SYSTEM TO ITS SOCIAL SERVICES PACKAGE. THE SYSTEM SUCCESSFULLY OPERATES SUCCESSFULLY TODAY.

It may look like a regular phone. A handset, keys and a cable plugged into the telephone socket. But if you take a closer look, you will see that the keys are bigger and that next to the standard ones with numbers, three extra buttons have been added: red, green and blue.

The most important is the red one which can be used to call for help. Since its introduction in 2012, Gdynia's remote care system has been provided to as many as 100 people under the care of the Municipal Social Services Centre and to all the residents who pay a subscription fee for this type of service.

"Remote care doesn't replace emergency services, but it facilitates their work. It is a logical add-on in today's reality of increasing numbers of elderly people becoming dependent on others", explains **Krzysztof Michał Bruski**, President of Polskie Centrum Opieki (Polish Care Centre), a remote care provider contracted by Gdynia: "Generally, emergency services are dispatched in response to emergency call. But if someone is unable to make that call and is home alone, then in fact they have no possibility to call for help. This is where remote care comes in."



KRZYSZTOF MICHAŁ BRUSKI

President of Polskie Centrum Opieki / Polish Care Centre

In a nutshell, remote care means 24/7 monitoring of the elderly and disabled in their homes. All you need to do is press the alarm button. If fitted in the right place, it can be accessed in 94%

of emergency cases; for example after someone falls over. The button connects you immediately to the emergency centre.

“Before the service is activated, the necessary data is collected about the user, such as driving directions or access code to the patient’s house or apartment”, says Małgorzata Wasiewicz, Head of the Care Services Centre at the Municipal Social Services Centre in Gdynia: “We also gather the vital information about the user’s health, medicines and place of their storage. We have contact details of up to five people, of whom at least one has the spare keys to the user’s home. In case of an emergency we can get in without breaking the door.”

If the button was activated but the user doesn’t answer the phone, then the emergency centre operator calls for an ambulance and immediately informs the contact person about the emergency. In accordance with the procedures adopted in Gdynia, the fire brigade is notified if paramedics can’t enter the house or apartment.

Fortunately, there aren’t many cases like that. However, the employees of both the Municipal Social Services Centre and Polskie Centrum Pomocy emphasise that every call and intervention made so far has proven that the system is just as effective as it is necessary.

There have been cases of diabetic coma or syncope. One user in a wheelchair fell onto the floor. They pressed the alarm button and their contact person was notified. The user didn’t have to wait for help until the morning.



MAŁGORZATA WASIEWICZ

Head of the Care Services Centre at the Municipal Social Services Centre in Gdynia

Remote care users and care services providers undergo specialist trainings to ensure the efficient operation of the system. Once a month, the caregiver activates the alarm button to get connected to the emergency centre and thus test the device.

It is very important as the users are reassured that even though they live on their own, there is always someone available who will react immediately and come to help them.

The City of Gdynia pays a monthly subscription fee under which every resident can access the service on preferential terms.

Persons interested in remote care services may contact Centrum Usług Opiekuńczych MOPS (Care Services Centre at the Municipal Social Services Centre in Gdynia), ul. Grabowo 2, tel. (0048) 58 625 93 78, (0048) 797 993 619.



A safe place close to home

THIS PLACE IS NOT MEANT AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR SERVICES PROVIDED AT HOME; IT IS INTENDED TO COMPLEMENT THEM. EVERY DAY, 12 SENIORS COME TO THE DAY-CARE CENTRE IN GDYNIA CISOWA. THOSE FEW HOURS THEY SPEND HERE ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF THEIR DAY. THEY FEEL AT HOME HERE AND THE PEOPLE WORKING WITH THEM SAY THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO OVERESTIMATE THE BENEFITS OF THE SENIORS' STAY IN THE CENTRE.



MAŁGORZATA GŁADCZAK

Director of Local Social Services Centre No 3 in Gdynia

KORDIAN KULASZEWICZ

President of the M&K Adaptation Foundation

According to **Małgorzata Gładczak**, Director of Local Social Services Centre No 3 in Gdynia: "The story of the day-care centre starts with us because in fact all our patients come from our region. These are people who live alone, but are fit enough to get to the centre with the support of a family member or a caregiver and thus can attend our classes. Today we have twelve people under our care, eleven women and one man. They spend seven hours a day with us, from Monday to Friday. The

fee depends on their income. Some of them pay not much more than PLN 2 (EUR 0.50) for the entire day, including lunch and afternoon tea. The centre is run by an NGO contracted by the city authorities."

Kordian Kulaszewicz, President of the M&K Adaptation Foundation which runs the day-care centre is clear that: "Everyday our patients have physical exercise supervised by a physical therapist, take part in individual therapeutic classes, eat together and have some time off for themselves if they need it. We see every day how they change. They build new relations, have their place at the table. They feel needed and important. Everything they do here, for example during the therapeutic sessions, is considered by them as their work."

"They have grown to like this place and treat it as their own", adds **Małgorzata Gładczak**.

Katarzyna Stec, Deputy Director of the Municipal Social Services Centre in Gdynia attests that: "The support in the form of a day-care centre doesn't replace home care services. In many cases the senior requires the caregiver's assistance in getting ready in the morning, preparing breakfast, cleaning or shopping. However, the patient-caregiver relation is different from the relations seniors can build in a group."

Marek Szymański, Municipal Social Services Centre in Gdynia is clear that, "This is a well-targeted service. I would say it is a good compromise between the benefits of getting out of home and working in a group, and the ability to focus on the senior's individual needs."

Meanwhile, **Katarzyna Stec** adds, "We would like to have day-care centres in every district of the city. Their proximity and placement in a well-known environment are the strongest points of this form of support".

Local Social Services Centre No 3

ul. Działowskiego, Gdynia-Leszczynki
tel. 58 663 20 20

Location of the day-care centre:

ul. Chyłońska 217, Gdynia Cisowa

Space open to seniors

SPACE IS A PLACE DETERMINED BY THE GIVEN SURFACE AND WHAT IS ON IT. IT CAN ALSO INCLUDE PLACES IN THE ONLINE WORLD, SUCH AS SOCIAL MEDIA WEBSITES OR BLOGS. WHEN FILLED WITH PEOPLE'S ACTIVITIES, THEY BECOME PART OF SOCIAL SPACE. THIS TYPE OF SPACE ALSO SATISFIES PEOPLE'S NEEDS, BECOMES FAMILIAR TO THEM AND BEGINS TO PLAY A ROLE IN THEIR LIFE. IF EASILY ACCESSIBLE, SOCIAL SPACE CAN BE OPEN TO A VARIETY OF USERS.

THE CITY OF GDYNIA OFFERS SEVERAL SUCH PLACES TO ITS SENIOR CITIZENS.

“Sociologist Ray Oldenburg was writing about the days when you could go to the hairdresser anytime you wanted, just to sit there and wait for your turn. You could be sure there would always be someone to talk to and that the hairdresser would never let you just sit there in silence”, says **Jarosław Józefczyk**, Deputy Director of the Municipal Social Services Centre in Gdynia: “Nowadays there aren't many such places outside of work or home, places where you can simply meet someone, talk to them and maybe start a new relation.”

During one of its sessions, the Committee of the Union of the Baltic Cities discussed the topic of public spaces that are generally open. The participants quickly realised that such places exist practically in every city. They are open to everyone and promote socialisation independently of the city's initiatives. They include spaces inspired by urban architecture, squares and green areas where people can hang out together. Access to them is either free or the payment is small. There are no barriers and their offer is both addressed to and created by a whole variety of people.

The most basic function of such open social spaces is facilitating people's face-to-face contact. Here everyone, regardless of their age, can assume the role in

which they feel best, from a safely distanced observer to an active creator.

“In Gdynia, we have defined a dozen or so of such places very early on. They include spaces animated by the city (e.g. Infobox), squares, museums (e.g. Emigration Museum), but also initiatives such as the Garden of Friendship in Opata Hackiego and Zamenhofa Streets, built from scratch by the residents themselves”, says Józefczyk: “We decided to present them as a value in themselves, but also as something that can be freely used and enriched.”

It is necessary to pay special attention to some groups, e.g. senior citizens, to ensure their presence in such open urban spaces. Such people need to be encouraged to go to these places, participate in events and their organisation. Open spaces are a great place to break stereotypes and to show seniors as dynamic, active and creative people.

A SELECTION OF OPEN SOCIAL SPACES IN GDYNIA:

1. Wymiennikownia (Chylonia) – Youth Centre for Social Innovation and Design
2. tuBaza (Kolibki Park) – workshops, exhibitions, shows, meetings
3. Emigration Museum in Gdynia
4. Laboratory of Social Innovation (PPNT)
5. Gdynia Główna Theatre
6. Garden of Friendship – Social Garden – local neighbourhood area (Chylonia)
7. Kawiarnia sąsiedzka / Neighborhood Cafe (Chylonia)
8. Club 1, 2, 3 (Działki Leśne)
9. “Open School” Programme
10. Gdynia Start Up Zone (PPNT)
11. Gdynia InfoBox – Observatory of Changes
12. www.seniorplus.gdynia.pl
13. Urban public spaces which take the role of open social spaces (Polanka Redłowska, Park of the Council of Europe, Arka Gdynia Square, green areas at InfoBox and Gdynia Film Centre, beaches)

Like clockwork – Towards High Quality Care

THEY WEREN'T CREATED IN AN OFFICE. NEITHER ARE THEY ART FOR ART'S SAKE. BEFORE THEY WERE ADOPTED, A LONG DEBATE TOOK PLACE WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF ALL THE INTERESTED PARTIES. CONSTANTLY UPDATED, THE GDYNIA STANDARDS FOR HOME CARE SERVICES CONSTITUTES A UNIQUE POLICY IN THE WHOLE OF POLAND.

First, a debate lasting several months was held in 2010–2011, involving several partners in Gdynia. Care beneficiaries and care providers met both in groups and individually to discuss the requirements with which good care services should comply. Everyone had a chance to speak freely, while the safety of the respondents was ensured. Eventually, the works resulted in the adoption of the Gdynia Standards for Home Care Services.

“On the one hand the document helps us in our work and, on the other hand, it specifies the expectations of and requirements for all the parties involved in care services”, says Katarzyna Stec, Deputy Director of the Municipal Social Services Centre in Gdynia: “The Standards facilitate the ordering and contracting of services with service providers, i.e. NGOs and companies. They are included as one of the requirements in tender and competition specifications, and constitute an appendix to agreements signed with care services providers. Because of this, they know exactly the conditions with which they need to comply. We also pay attention to securing the appropriate working conditions for caregivers who need to have the required qualifications.”

According to Marek Szymański, Municipal Social Services Centre in Gdynia, “With the standards in force, we can now be sure that everyone will be obliged to provide high-quality services for years to come. The

document specifies a catalogue of care services and fields in which they can be provided. Importantly enough, the catalogue can be extended to meet every patient's individual needs.”

“During the debate on the quality of care services it was often emphasised that it is necessary to support and activate the patients rather than do their work for them”, Katarzyna Stec notes: “The caregiver is to help prepare dinner and not to cook it all by herself or himself. Of course, it would be faster and more efficient to dress the patient before going for a walk, but we all agree that it is of great value for the patient to participate in daily activities and to keep them as independent as possible for as long as possible. To this end, they need to actively participate in their everyday routines.”

The elderly people often pointed to safety issues in situations when they are home alone. As a result, remote care was added to care services. Moreover, all the patients need to have the possibility from now on, so as to make a direct phone call to their caregiver if necessary.

Safety also entails the ability to move freely around the apartment. To provide for better conditions of care, it is now possible to apply to the State Fund for Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons (PFRON) for the funds to improve accessibility and eliminate barriers at home. Such applications are scored higher, as removal of physical obstacles allows senior citizens to function in their own apartment without the caregiver's assistance.

Marek Szymański states that, “It is very important for seniors to be able to live in their own home for as long as possible. Hence our broad-spectrum focus on providing support, using the already available resources, maintaining relations, preserving manual skills and autonomy. Especially that, according to the research, 85% of seniors would like to stay in their own environment, most preferably with the support of their loved ones.”

Katarzyna Stec notes that, “Of course, in most cases we manage to reach people who are alone, but it is very important to support families as well. When a beloved person becomes less autonomous, the family needs to reorganise their everyday life. We are fully aware that family members have their own responsibilities, in which case they will need our support. Even if only to protect them from their economic situation to get worse. Generally, people believe that if someone has relatives, it is their sole obligation to provide care. While in fact it is crucial that the caregiver can balance caring for their loved one with other spheres of their life, and to also have a moment of respite.”

The Gdynia Standards for Home Care Services has introduced obligatory assessments of patients’ autonomy. Every half a year, the patient’s needs are diagnosed to check whether it is necessary to change the form of care or modify its scope.

“Based on this monitoring we can adjust the services to the current needs. For instance, when the senior is less strong physically, we know we need to organise some mobility aids or other support”, says Katarzyna Stec.

If possible, the services are contracted long-term. “Providing access to care services and ensuring their stability in terms of caregivers is crucial for relations”, says Marek Szymański: “Sometimes caregivers are treated like family members, their patients grow closer with them. This is value added to the care process.”

The Gdynia Standards for Home Care Services address the following criteria: safety, cooperation, effectiveness, accessibility.

The main values adopted throughout the document include subjectivity, respect, freedom of choice and solidarity.

GENOWEFA HOPPE

Caregiver

“I have worked as a caregiver for 10 years. Over this time, I have provided care to 10 patients. I have visited one of them for 8.5 years now and another one for 5 years. Her condition is good enough that she doesn’t want any replacement when I go on holidays. These few years we have known each other is long enough to grow closer and gain trust. The most difficult part of our job is to establish a connection and build a relationship. This is not always possible, but I know that some behaviour is a result of the illness.

Currently, I provide care to five people. I visit one of them three times a week, the other four I see every day. Usually I spend two hours with them. I also come on weekends to some of them. I prepare meals, medicines, help them with personal hygiene, talk to them, and help them write greetings cards. I’m like a friend to them.

This job requires a lot of patience and physical strength. You need to bring groceries and carry them up the stairs, for example to the fourth floor, to clean the apartment.

When do I feel joy at work? When I manage to motivate my patients, when they praise me because they are happy with my work. One of the ladies I work with, when she happens to forget something, says that I am her brains.”



Get on the bus – but not just any bus!

OLGIERD WYSZOMIRSKI, DIRECTOR OF GDYNIA'S PUBLIC TRANSPORT, TALKS ABOUT TRAVELLING OPTIONS AND TRANSPORT IMPROVEMENTS ADDRESSED TO SENIOR CITIZENS IN GDYNIA.

“Since 2012, all the buses and trolleybuses in Gdynia are low-floor vehicles. We are very pleased about our achievements in this respect. Therefore, if I were to point out the most important enhancements in Gdynia’s public transport implemented with senior citizens in mind, this probably would be the biggest. Another one, also addressed to elderly people with disabilities, is the minibus service available since 1994. It works in a different way than public transport. The minibus is pre-ordered to the specific address by the passengers who also determine the vehicle’s route.”

There are multiple

minibus lines

in Gdynia which are accessible to everybody. They operate regularly and connect housing estates located far away from the main public transport routes. For example, Działki Leśne is the kind of district which would be difficult to access for traditional means of public transport. There is quite a big distance between the houses in the upper part of the district and the main transport routes of buses and trolleybuses. Improved access to them was our goal. The first minibus line was launched nearly 20 years ago – in 1997, public transport Midibuses started operating in the districts of Działki Leśne and Wzgórze św. Maksymiliana. It was important, particularly for the latter where a house in Norwida Street, which was to be turned into a Home for Veterans, was inhabited mainly by elderly people with reduced mobility.

“We kept the momentum and continued to develop our offer. Midibus line 102 goes to Upper Grabówek, Upper Leszczynki and Upper Chylonia. Midibuses also run to Kamienna Góra. The demand for public transport was reported for years here, but we were able to introduce it



only with the development of the Midibus offer. Currently, two lines go to Kamienna Góra. Midibuses operate also in Mały Kack, in Wrocławska and Sieradzka Streets, as well as in Wieluńska, Łęczycka and Olkuska Streets. This means that we now reach the houses located at the farthest end from the bus terminus in Sandomierska Street.

We have also extended the connection with the Moniuszko housing estate in Wzgórze św. Maksymiliana. Most Midibus lines don't operate very frequently and they run in limited hours: weekdays from 7–8 am to 5–6 pm and on Saturdays from 8 am to 3 pm. Since 2015, Midibuses run in Strzelców Street, i.e. in the housing estate without bus connections, located more than 1 km away from the main road. Finally, in December 2016, we opened a bus terminus in the Fikakowo housing estate, which can now be reached by trolleybuses (line no 29) powered by lithium-ion batteries on the route sections without electricity. At the same time, we still maintain Midibus line no 153 on the route from Fikakowo to the school in Starodworcowa Street. All these Midibus lines have significantly improved access to Gdynia’s public transport, which is reflected in positive opinions of the passengers. The study shows that on the scale from 2 to 5 (reflecting the academic grading system in Poland), our average note nowadays is 4.24, compared to 3.39 when we started implementing changes. Elderly people in particular seem to appreciate these improvements and give us high marks. The study was carried out on a representative group of people, thus providing reliable results.

With elderly passengers in mind, we continue to increase the number of

bus shelters.

When we started to build modern bus shelters in 1993, we didn't expect to have so many of them after over 20 years. Some of them are located even in places of secondary significance when it comes to the number of passengers that use them. Additional shelters have recently been put in Wolności Street, where only one Midibus line operates: every 40 minutes in the afternoon rush hours, otherwise every 80 minutes. I can assure all passengers that more bus shelters may be expected in places outside of the main routes, even if they are operated only by Midibus lines. It turns out that it is also important for Midibus passengers to be able to access the shelter and rest on its bench. Again, with the elderly in mind, our bus shelters have longer benches than the commercial ones owned by advertising companies.

It is also very important for senior citizens to keep the bus shelter side walls free of advertising. Otherwise, they can't see the approaching bus on time and get up early enough to walk up to it, without worrying that they might miss the bus. The respective regulations have been introduced which also apply to shelters commercially used, preventing the placement of street advertising on the shelter walls facing the approaching bus. In the case of commercial shelters, advertising is now placed on the back wall, which is why these shelters have shorter benches – the bench can't cover the advertising panel.”

“The Roads and Green Areas Authority (ZDiZ) in Gdynia also puts benches at bus stops. We are very happy that our cooperation is working out so well and because of this, benches are placed at the stops which have no shelters. For example, this was the case of Piłsudskiego Street.

The ZDiZ also modernises

the stops,

thus improving their quality. Firstly, modern curbs are used – they are rounded and allow bus drivers to drive up closer to the pavement. This resolves the problem of the gap between the pavement and the level of the bus or trolleybus for boarding. In some cases, the floor of the vehicle touches the curb at the same level. This is extremely important for elderly passengers. For some of them, taking a bigger step to get on the bus may be difficult if not impossible because of their health condition or stress experienced in such situations.

In places where passengers get on the bus, anti-skid plates are installed. Special horizontal lines mark the zone which shouldn't be entered until the bus comes to a complete stop. They are meant to protect the

passengers from being accidentally hit, for example, by one of the side mirrors which, in modern vehicles, are rather large.

Our representative study shows that one third of Gdynia's Public Transport passengers buy regular tickets, one third buy reduced tickets (including seniors under 70, i.e. those who pursuant to the Resolution of the City Council of Gdynia are not yet entitled to travel for free), while the last group comprises passengers who

don't pay for using the public transport.

The group entitled to travel for free is slightly over 20 percent, with the majority of them being senior citizens over 70 years of age. According to our study, some people derive a lot of pleasure from being able to use our services. For them, ride on the bus or trolleybus is the main reason to get out of the house.

They have their favourite seats; for example, the one by the front door is particularly popular on the right side of the bus. It is very comfortable and attractive, as it gives you the full view of the road and the driver driving the bus. The study shows that this seat is preferred over others whenever it is free. This is one of the reasons why, in accordance with the applicable quality standards, we don't allow buses or trolleybuses in our rolling stock which don't offer the seating space at the front door.

In the buses and trolleybuses, special single seats are designated for passengers from privileged groups. We are thinking of launching a campaign addressed to our passengers to promote the service and thus ensure better travelling conditions for the elderly. Our study of passengers' behaviour and preferences reveals that, for most of them, it is important to find just enough space to be able to stand on the bus without being bothered by others, but a large percentage of people still say that their favourable assessment of our services depends on their ability to find a sitting place on the bus.

However, I must admit that an information campaign favouring one specific group of passengers is a task that requires careful thought and due consideration.

Further information about Gdynia's public transport may be found at zkmgdynia.pl. On the website, you can also subscribe to the newsletter containing information on the public transport offer and changes in its operation

Infoline available 24/7: (0048) 801 174 194, (0048) 695 174 194

Gdynia for Everyone

– Universally Designed Urban Space



MAREK WYSOCKI, PHD, TELLS US WHAT GDYNIA HAS DONE TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO URBAN SPACE FOR ALL ITS CITIZENS, REGARDLESS OF THEIR AGE AND HEALTH. HE IS AN ENGINEER AND ARCHITECT, EXPERT ON URBAN SPACE AND ITS ACCESSIBILITY AT GDYNIA'S ROADS AND GREEN AREAS AUTHORITY (ZDIZ), AND DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRE FOR UNIVERSAL DESIGN AT GDAŃSK UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY.

“Since 2004, the Gdańsk University of Technology and the City of Gdynia have worked together on comprehensive development of urban space to make it friendlier to various groups of the population, particularly the elderly and people with disabilities. After the success of the workshop “City Without Barriers”, Gdynia’s next step was to adopt the Barcelona Declaration which, among others, points to the role of local self-governments in building friendly cities. The work is carried out in cooperation with Beata Wachowiak-Zwara, Plenipotentiary of the President of Gdynia for People with Disabilities.

On 17th May 2013, the Accessibility Standards were adopted with the Resolution of the President of Gdynia. They include guidelines for the design and development of public spaces to make them friendly to all the people who use them, regardless of their limitations. The Standards are included as an Appendix to public space studies performed for the purposes of tender offers and contracts for the management or lease of public space.

GDYNIA AS ACCESSIBILITY LEADER

Gdynia’s investment of nearly two decades in creating accessible urban space has been appreciated. The city has received the prestigious title of Accessibility Leader in the category of local self-government and the Grand Prix in recognition of its merit in this respect. On 26th September 2016, the President of Poland Andrzej Duda presented the award to Wojciech Szczurek, President of Gdynia, at the Presidential Palace in Warsaw.

The “Accessibility Leader” Competition is organised by the Integration Foundation and the Polish Urban Planners Association, under the honorary patronage of the President of Poland.

Since autumn 2014, I have provided expert advice on urban space accessibility in the City of Gdynia. With all the generations in mind, we have tried to create a city that is both safe and comfortable. We have designed the so-called city perch seats, benches with armrests and with backrest, ideal for frequent rests. Outdoor gyms have been equipped with exercise machines that can be used while sitting. We have promoted the exchange of concrete cobblestone paths to smooth surfaces. Where possible, we want to limit the traffic and widen the pavements.

We have also built integrated playgrounds where healthy children and children with disabilities can play together. And on the beach in Orłowo we have installed special sun screens. We plan to create places where seniors could meet and exercise their memory. I always repeat that people matter the most. All urban space developments must be implemented in a way that makes people feel good in them. The friendly space created today will make us all want to grow old in Gdynia.”

The Accessibility Standards for the City of Gdynia can be downloaded at zdiz.gdynia.pl (tab “do pobrania”/“download”)

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Photographs: Alina Żemojdzin, with the exception of the photo of Beata Podlasek (by Grzegorz Dolecki); archives of the Gdynia City Hall, Laboratory of Social Innovation, Municipal Social Services Centre and Gdynia Sports Centre

Graphic design, illustrations and typesetting: Joanna Kurowska

Translation: Pracownia Przekładu MONO

Print and binding: Druk Studio

Published by: The Municipal Social Services Centre in Gdynia in association with the Laboratory of Social Innovation

First edition
Gdynia 2017





Laboratorium
Innowacji
Społecznych

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