

'Faces of Life's Autumn.'

On June 12, 2011 the Lithuanian partner of SICRIE project celebrated the opening of the mobile exhibition titled 'Faces of Life's Autumn.'

The purpose of preparing this exhibition was to celebrate the dignity of human life in older age and arose out of the work of the participants of the SICRIE project since the first meeting of the project partners in November 2009. During the months that followed, the participants discussed different ways of drawing attention to the difficulties older people face in today's Lithuania, and agreed to bring together their reflections in approaching a number of older people with a request to allow their photographs taken for the exhibition. Most of those approached agreed, and what followed was a rather prolonged and very interesting process of visiting the people in their homes, discussing the purpose of this exhibition, but also inevitably touching upon wider questions: human worth, beauty, dignity and the lack of these in the concrete contexts.

Held at Portico school located in Klaipeda Baptist church, the celebration included the actual viewing of the photos and the interviews with some of the older people, including some of those who appeared in the photographs. The responses to a request to share their most memorable impression from their life and also to leave a wish, or an advice, to today's young people resulted in an amazing mosaic of stories. After an official launch, there was space to hold personal discussions over a cup of tea, or to leave a written impression about the exhibition. The later feature will follow the exhibition when it is held in other places too, thereby giving it an aspect of continuity and development. Other reactions of the participants were filmed and will be included in the video material on the exhibition. Those who were working with the persons being photographed also shared their experience and the ways their own perceptions have been challenged as a result of preparing for the exhibition.



Two representatives from the Czech partner of the project were present and gave a word of greeting, sharing some of their impressions about the value of the project such as this, especially in learning an unknown story of the life of those whose young years were spent under the Soviet regime but who now find themselves in a very different environment in their advanced years.

It is hoped that the exhibition will continue in other places in Lithuania. The photographs of the exhibition are intentionally not printed but projected on a screen, thereby making the exhibition easy to transport and assemble.

One of the impressions written during the launch says the following: "When I was younger, I wondered if the advance of years can actually bring improvement on one's life. So far this turned out to be true for me: I do enjoy my time of retirement more than the time when I still needed to go to work!"

This is not the usual reaction to older age, but represents the same hope that the participants of this project had in working on the exhibition: to celebrate the old age as an opportunity for hope, creativity, and celebration of life in all its seasons.

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