



update report from the meeting of the
Futeurope project in Debrecen,
Hungary,
October 7-10, 2008.

Attended by:

Carolyn Ellis - Amber valley CVS

Elaine Broadhurst - Amber valley CVS

Jan Colombo - Representing Alfreton & Ripley District 50+ Forum

Trev Steed - Representing Alfreton & Ripley District 50+ Forum

Our visit to Debrecen in Hungary followed a formal agenda which encompassed meetings, presentations and visits to facilities for older people.

This report aims to illustrate and share what we have learnt from this brief visit in relation to the support older people receive in Hungary.

October is the 'Month of the Seniors' in Hungary and there are a number of events throughout the month to highlight older people and the issues that they might face. People aged over 60 are considered to be an older person.

The 'House of Equal Opportunity'

Every major town in Hungary, including Budapest, has a 'House of Equal Opportunity'. These places support people who are discriminated against in some way and the organisation has been set up to encourage inclusion.

The houses work with and support six main groups of the population. These groups are:

- Women. In Hungary there can be problems for women who have gone on maternity leave and would like to return to work. There is also high unemployment for women aged over 40.
- The disabled. Approximately 10 years ago a law was passed in Hungary to ensure that disabled people had the same level of access and opportunities as able bodied people
- The gypsy population. Approximately 10% of the 10 million population are classed as being gypsy. There may be more gypsy people than the figure suggests, however, many gypsy people do not admit to being so due to the fear of being stigmatised
- Older People
- Children, Hungary have used the SureStart model to set up children's groups run just by volunteers.
- Deprived areas of the community

As well as supporting the 6 groups above the House of Equal Opportunity in Debrecen also supports the 3000 groups that also provide services to the groups above and so communication between the two is very important.

The House of Equal Opportunities provides legal help, a signpost service, help to complete applications (eg housing applications) and a support service for people who feel discriminated by society. Records are kept of the problems that people have and these are sent to the Secretary of Equal Opportunities.

The House of Equal Opportunities can also investigate cases on behalf of employees that feel they have been discriminated against. If employers are found to have discriminated against a person they are then fined.

The organisation has three full time staff as well as volunteers from the University of Debrecen and older people in the community. All the staff receive training once a month from central government which also gives the employees of the House of Equal Opportunities to feedback the queries they have had. The government also uses the organisation to consult with the general public.

The House of Equal Opportunity is funded by central government.

Each county has their own specific issues which rule what services are provided. In Debrecen they have an equal split of enquiries from all six groups.

Topics discussed at the meeting at ÉLETFA Association

Each country was given a copy of a paper written by the the Netherlands. The countries discussed the topics of identity, loneliness and solidarity between generations.

Each country gave examples of how they felt each of the topics was dealt with in their country and addressed topics such as befriending schemes, inter-generational living and treating people as an individual rather than a problem or ailment.

An example of a Care Home in Debrecen

As part of the programme the group visited the Péter Méliusz Juhász Reformed Rest Home in Debrecen. The home was a Christian run organisation. The majority of the residents were Protestant although they did have some Roman Catholic residents and some atheist/agnostic residents. Debrecen is a Protestant city which is unusual as Hungary is predominately a Roman Catholic country.

The home also received state funding. This had impacted on the home as recently they were only able to accept people sent by the government that had quite severe needs.

Most of the rooms in the home were double rooms and so were shared by couples, siblings or friends. This created problems if one of the couple died as the home was unable to move another person in as they did not want to upset the remaining person. The home has capacity for 87 residents but at the time of the visit had only 74 residents and this created problems as they received funding per person.

The home had a waiting list of people that wanted to move in and the length of time they had to wait was approximately 6 months to a year although it could take up to 2 years.

The residents were encouraged to bring their own furniture and belongings to the rooms so that they could personalise them and make the transition from home to care home as easy as possible.

The home was subject to several checks throughout the year to check the finances and the level of care. However, in Hungary private care homes are not subject to any checks into the level of care for residents, working conditions for staff and how finances are spent.

The next study meeting is planned to take place in Ripley, UK in March 2009.

If you have any comments you would like to make on the differences or similarities in relation to care for older people in Hungary with that of England, or if you have any questions you would like to raise please complete the form below and return it to:

Tracey Sims
Amber Valley CVS,
Market Place,
Ripley,
Derbyshire,
DE5 3HA



Futeurope Study Project

Name (optional) –

Address (Optional) –

Comments on differences or similarities in relation to care for older people in Hungary with that of England	
Differences	Similarities

--	--

Questions:
1.
2.
3.
4.