

Sprengelhaus - an intergenerational oasis in Berlin

External good practice by the Comparative Research Network e.V. Berlin, Germany.

Sprengelhaus, community center since 2002

The Sprengelhaus is an intergenerational and intercultural neighborhood community center in Berlin-Wedding. It is situated in the Sprengelkiez. The area known for its

negative socio-economic data but as well for its peaceful multicultural character is recently going through the process of gentrification and mobilization of the inhabitants. The Sprengelhaus is a driver of this mobilization since 2002.

It was established in the frame of the Berlins government neighborhood management initiative. Since than it was transformed into an association, which run the center. The association understands itself as an umbrella for local initiatives, clubs, NGOs and company in order to help them to work in the Sprengelkiez successfully. The Sprengelhaus offers rooms, use contacts to local and regional administrative bodies and helps to publish and advertise programs and projects taking place in the house.



The Sprengelhaus describe itself as an intergenerational meeting point. By working on health, education, development of civil engagement and sharing experiences, they clearly reach their goal.

For the promotion of the civil society in the Sprengelkiez, the team is publishing brochures and guides to different topics. One of the latest publication was a guide titled „to be old in Sprengelkiez", the guide was edited in cooperation with senior initiatives and the local church parish.

Intergenerational courses concerning movement, healthy food and digital media are organized in the Sprengelhaus.

The "nachbarschaftsladen" (neighborhood shop) is an integrated part of the center. Here every month a tale cafe is organized, where local citizens share their stories. They organize another monthly event called: "to have a look inside mama's pot", where famous and less famous amateur chefs share receipts and stories of their life.

Digital aspects of good practice

The Sprengelhaus is existing since 2002. It is run with private and public funds, the sources are mainly local and city programs. Since the center is lacking of manpower and capacity in its organization, European projects and cooperation are lacking. Thus the focus is on the local neighborhood, the audience is international, since people from more than 50 countries live in the Sprengelkiez.

The center is lively, since not just the Sprengelhaus e.V. Is working here, but the



house is sub-rented to other community based organizations and companies.

The Sprengelhaus focus is on health and intercultural life. They cooperate with schools and elderly homes and bring both groups together. Initiatives on common movement trainings exist, just like language cafés, where people from different cultures and generations meet to talk German. Guides are published and other events organized by the elderly home or schools are promoted through the center.

In offering an easy accessible, permanent and regular programs, the center became a true meeting point of all generations in the Sprengelkiez.

Strength, weakness, opportunities and threads of good practice

Strength

During the evaluation process a couple of strength had been identified.

- The Sprengelhaus has a strong outreach to all age groups, within the Sprengelkiez and into the city of Berlin.

- The Centre has a long ongoing experience and work routine in intergenerational context.
- A well established and active network of partner organizations help to perform and disseminate intergenerational projects.
- The Sprengelhaus has assets, which secure the sustainability of the good practice.
- Creative and new projects (like the story cafe or the language cafe) benefit from the "brand" Sprengelhaus. It increases their visibility and credibility.

Weakness

During the evaluation not too many weaknesses had been found.

- The missing European dimension is limiting the exchange of experiences and reflection of the intergenerational and intercultural curricula.

Opportunities

The Sprengelhaus is already using most of the opportunities. The evaluation identified just a few other:

- By fostering the international dimension of the center, the quality of the events could be further increased and extra funding could be acquired.
- With a stronger digital presence, the visibility of the center can be increased.

Threads

During the SWOT Analysis not too many threads had been found.

- The center is mostly dependent on local funds. A diversification will help to increase the sustainability of the Sprengelhaus.
- The result of the analysis clearly see the strength and opportunities of the Sprengelhaus. It is already a good working community Centre, which works with an intergenerational focus. It can be seen as a good practice, since interaction between the generations in the cities is as important and frequent as between cultures.

Which aspects are transferable?

The Sprengelhaus is a unique place in a unique location. Thus the concepts of their intergenerational work is universal and easy adaptable elsewhere.

The projects are all based on methods of sharing and reflecting upon own or other experiences. Ideas like the tell cafe, the cooking events or the language exchange can be performed by other institutions or organizations, which have a certain local outreach.

The connection of intergenerational education and community work are transferable to most places in Europe.

A success story of the good practice

In the interview with the head of the Sprengelhaus, it was hard to find just one success story. In the story cafe at that day an 80 year old lady was talking to a younger group, how life changed in the Sprengelkiez in the last 60 years, she lived there.

Good stories had been told about the Turkish grandparents who learned talking German with the younger people together in the bilateral language meetings. But the most liked story for the director is the cooking program „to look in Mamas pot". In this program all nations living in Sprengelkiez come together to share receipts, talk about their lives and cook together. Especially older citizens love to learn new receipts and spending time together with age mixed company. It helps lonesome elderlies to have company but increases at the same time the feeling of community in the Sprengelkiez.