

Project HARVESTING

SENIORS' meeting at the KILINGI- NÕMME CLUBHOUSE 07.02.2009 (topic 'Change')
THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:16

The leader of the project Kalle Kiipus opened the meeting by presenting ideas behind this project.

After the presentation participating seniors were asked the same question that was asked from the seniors in WIJK ann Zee: NAME THE THREE EVENTS THAT HAVE CHANGED YOUR LIFE MOST.

The following answers were given (presented without any particular order or ranking)

1. FAMILY OCCASIONS. Marriage or divorce; separating from siblings; birth of a child; early death of a parent, death of a child or a spouse.
2. MOVING TO A NEW PLACE. From a country-home to a town to study, changing living-place, incl. settling down in Kilingi-Nõmme, beginning of independent life as an adult.
3. WORLD WAR II. Losing homes during the war (homes being burnt down by foreign troops), battles, living between two frontlines.
4. REPRESSIONS DURING THE SOVIET OCCUPATION. Deportation of whole families to Siberia. Getting in Kulag prison camps. Escaping. People hiding in woods to avoid the repressions mentioned above. These people later had difficulties and lacked possibilities acquiring education and that due to political believes. Being framed as public enemy.
5. FIRST JOB. Looking for job after returning from deportation or released from a prison camp. Being affected by a Soviet system of compulsory appointment to a job. (Work related memories are essential, because a lot has changed since then).
6. RETIREMENT.
7. POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES, CHANGES IN THE SURROUNDING SOCIETY. War. Poverty and hunger. The Soviet period as a whole. The Singing revolution. Regaining independence and as a result, completely different economical system.

It was agreed, that everyone would write his/her short biography by the time the next meeting will be held and later one more story describing three most important periods in their lives. It was found out that attention should be paid to whether a person was born in Kilingi-Nõmme or has moved here for different reasons. It would also be interesting to learn about their parents or how their parents have influenced their lives.

People in the thirties-forties, but even younger people may find these stories to be interesting. Reading these stories may make them a bit more humble and help them understand better what has happened in the history of Estonia. There is no need to wonder if doing this is necessary: some people will definitely be interested in reading the stories. Maybe these memoirs will be a start to wider research and recording of local biographies.

A difference was noticed in the way Estonians and Dutch discussed the same topic: Estonians seemed to describe the chain of events which influenced their lives while the Dutch focused more on the consequences and outcomes of changing times. The Estonians will also

focus more on the consequences and complete such a list during their next discussion on 4March.

To cut a long story short, our seniors feel good about their lives today since they have a guaranteed income and they can get enough of black bread. When they wake up in the morning they may think there is nothing to do; when they go to bed the same night they feel there are many jobs left undone.

The next meeting will be held at the Kilingi-Nõmme clubhouse on 4 March 2009.