



**European Approaches
to Inter-Generational
Lifelong Learning**

**Contemporary Witnesses
Exchange Association**

**GERMANY
Case Study Identity Card
2007**



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EAGLE CASE STUDY

GERMANY

Work Package:	WP 2 Scoping & Mapping
Authors:	Renate Hahner (FIM-NewLearning); Eva Geffers & Gertrud Achinger (ZZB), Germany
Research Coordination:	Thomas Fischer & Walter F. Kugemann (FIM-NewLearning), Germany
Project Officer at the European Commission:	Brian Holmes & Ramunas Kuncaitis
Publisher:	FIM-NewLearning, University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, Konrad-Zuse-Straße 3, D-91052 Erlangen, Phone: +49 9131 8524735, Fax: +49 9131 8524738, E-Mail: info@fim.uni-erlangen.de , Web: www.fim.uni-erlangen.de

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

The Contemporary Witnesses Exchange Association (ZeitZeugenBörse; ZZB) is a registered non-profit volunteer organisation founded by private citizens of Berlin in 1993. The 'Federal Ministry of Education and Research' promoted the Contemporary Witnesses Exchange Association from 1994 to 1997, since 1998 is a registered non-profit volunteer organisation.

The main aim of the Contemporary Witnesses Exchange Association is to offer contemporary education, which is supporting the dialogue between the generations. The older people benefit from the initiative by staying in contact with younger people and by knowing their memories are useful and meaningful for the new generations. The young people get a lively impression of history and get to know individually experienced historical events or periods. The Contemporary Witnesses Exchange Association therefore contributes to intergenerational learning areas of history, reminiscence and to the preservation of cultural heritage and memory.

The elder citizens or 'Zeitzeugen' (i.e. contemporary witnesses) share their experiences about several historical periods with the younger generation. The older members of the ZZB meet young people in schools, universities, adult educational institutions and they talk to newspaper and magazine journalists and they appear on television and radio programmes.

Their experiences are of interest to the general public, especially for young people, and concern in particular the relevant historical events that have taken place in Berlin. The relevant experiences can be dated from the Weimar Republic up to the present. The requests of educational institutions and the media mostly concentrate on the fascist Nazi regime, the 2nd World War, the fall of Berlin at the end of WWII, the divided city and the occupation zones of the allied forces after 1945, the building and fall of the Berlin wall, furthermore the specific local history of quarters and neighbourhoods in Berlin as well as of certain personalities are favoured topics.

40% of the requests to the Contemporary Witnesses Exchange Association are originating from educational institutions (i.e. schools, universities, adult training centres), 40% from the media (i.e. newspapers, magazines, film, TV, radio) and 20% from other parties.



2 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

<i>Title</i>	Contemporary Witnesses Exchange Association (ZeitZeugenBörse)
<i>Country/ Countries of origin</i>	Germany
<i>Duration</i>	Starting Year: 1993 End Year: ongoing
<i>Status</i>	Running
<i>Manag- ing insti- tution</i>	Voluntary/social sector/foundations
<i>Contact details</i>	<p>Last Name: Geffers First Name: Eva Title: Ms Position/Role: Chair</p> <p>Last Name: Achinger First Name: Gertrud Title: Dr Position/Role: Deputy Chair Institution: ZeitZeugenBörse e.V. Street: Ackerstr. 13 Town: Berlin Post Code: D-10115 Phone: 0049 30 440 46 378 Fax: 0049 30 440 46 379 E-Mail: info@zeitzeugenboerse.de URL: www.zeitzeugenboerse.de</p>
<i>Funding</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public ▪ Private <p><u>Comments:</u> The Berlin senate pays the office rent and telephone costs, the members of the association pay a yearly contribution of € 30, the persons/organisations requesting to talk to Zeitzeugen are asked for voluntary donations and some of the Zeitzeugen donate the payments they receive in some cases for their services. Further planning includes to contact potential sponsors, which could support the initiative monetarily.</p>
<i>Partner- ship ar- range- ment/org anisa- tional form</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bottom-up, grass root initiative <p><u>Comments:</u> The Contemporary Witnesses Exchange Association was founded by private citizens related to the representation of senior citizens in the Berlin senate and by persons related to adult organisations and universities. The ZZB depends on the efforts of its volunteer members i.e. the contemporary witnesses and the persons volunteering in the office.</p>

Scale

- Community based
- Local
- Regional
- (National; European; International in preparation)

Comments: All temporary witnesses live in Berlin and the surrounding area. The talks and discussions with the witnesses usually take place somewhere in the city grounds Berlin, either at the homes of the contemporary witnesses or in the rooms of the requesting institutions. Although at the moment being a local and regional initiative with the focus on Berlin, the Zeit-Zeugenbörse is collaborating with similar initiatives in several German cities (e.g. Hamburg, Göttingen) and has a partnership with a temporary witnesses initiative in Poland. Further extensions on national and European levels are desirable if possible. Also a contact with an American school is established and common activities are in preparation.

3 DESCRIPTION OF COLLABORATING GROUPS

<p>Collaborating Group I (e.g. kids, young teenagers, young adults/twens, parents aged adults, empty nest adults, young seniors, old seniors; marginalized groups, people with special needs, 'people at risk', immigrants, students, teachers, family, community, other target groups)</p>	<p>The temporary witnesses usually are persons older than sixty, only a few of them are young people, about 50:50 male and female. The members of the staff are senior citizens (pensioners) and younger persons (e.g. students, temporarily unemployed after-exam-students, people looking for voluntary work).</p>
<p>Total number of Collaborating Group I</p>	<p>About 200 temporary witnesses as members of ZeitZeugenBörse.</p>
<p>Age group(s) of Collaborating Group I</p>	<p>Minimum Age: 6 Maximum Age: 95 <u>Description:</u> Temporary witnesses: about 80% older than 60 years; staff members from about 25 to 75.</p>
<p>Collaborating Group II (e.g. kids, young teenagers, young adults/twens, parents aged adults, empty nest adults, young seniors, old seniors; marginalized groups, people with special needs, 'people at risk', immigrants, stu-</p>	<p>The target groups are usually young people, e.g. students from schools and other educational institutions. But also adults (e.g. in adult training centres) are a target group of the initiative. Altogether, the target groups are: students, teachers, communities, journalists, TV and radio managers, authors, and academic researchers. The gender distribution is in average 50% male and female.</p>



dents, teachers, family, community, other target groups)	
Total number of Collaborating Group II	About 250 requests per year <u>Comments:</u> About 250 institutions requesting the services of the ZZB per year, about 400 temporary witnesses give presentations per year; the total number can be only estimated as the accounts of the contemporary witnesses are also broadcasted through radio and TV.
Age group(s) of Collaborating Group II	<u>Minimum Age:</u> 6 <u>Maximum Age:</u> approx. 60 to 70

4 DESCRIPTION OF INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING PRACTICES

The practice description of intergenerational learning practices serves a twofold purpose: i) a qualitative practice description of the case and ii) a quantitative assessment of additional case descriptors.

Description of Learning Arrangement & Learning Practice

The aim of the Contemporary Witnesses Exchange Association (ZeitZeugenBörse = ZZB) is to offer contemporary education, which is supporting the dialogue between the generations. The older people benefit from the initiative by staying in contact with younger people and by knowing their memories are useful and meaningful for the new generations. The young people get a lively impression of history and get to know individually experienced historical events or periods. The Contemporary Witnesses Exchange Association therefore contributes to intergenerational learning areas of history, reminiscence and to the preservation of cultural heritage and memory.

The ZZB is offering internal and external events and presentations. Internally, the temporary witnesses are further educated twice per month. They have to achieve abilities in public speaking, answering questions and telling their own experiences in an understandable way. Externally, the ZZB offers talks and discussions to interested target groups referring to several topics. Also performances and presentations in memorial places are organised.

The temporary witnesses do not have to be motivated; they are contacting the ZZB in great numbers. On the contrary, the interested temporary witnesses have to undergo a filter process (i.e. a questionnaire in the beginning, a discussion with the ZZB representatives) in order to guarantee the quality of the temporary witnesses presentations.

The educational and media target groups at the moment are not systematically encouraged. The ZZB is reacting to requests. But for the future systematic awareness raising and public relationship actions in schools, universities etc are planned.

The talks and presentations of the contemporary witnesses are not carried out regularly, but depending on requests (about 400 presentations per year).

As a basic learning material the brochure 'Educational Work with Contemporary Witnesses' ('Bildungsarbeit mit Zeitzeugen') of Prof. Ortfried Schäffter, Professor for Adult Education at the Humboldt University Berlin and one of the founders of the ZZB, is used. Additionally, the temporary witnesses use texts, audios, videos and presentations.

The ZZB maintains a website (<http://www.zeitzeugenboerse.de>) informing about their work, background and publications. The 'Letters from Contemporary Witnesses' ('Zeitzeugenbriefe'), a monthly publication of the initiative, can be downloaded from the website or subscribed via post or e-mail. Finally ZZB started an additional online service entitled 'Contemporary Pictures' (Zeitbilder at <http://www.zeitbilder.info>) presenting videos of contemporary witnesses telling their story and their experiences about certain époques of the past.

The presentations, talks and events carried out by the ZZB are organised by the volunteering staff of the initiative.

Location of the learning activity

Formal settings i.e. educational institutes, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO), museums, libraries and work based settings

Informal settings i.e. community facility/building, at home based and other social settings

Comments/Description: TV, radion stations, newspaper offices, youth hostels, community meeting places

<i>Learning activities (related to policy objectives)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ History and reminiscence incl. oral history, preserving cultural heritage, work with contemporary witnesses ▪ Mentoring i.e. intergenerational support, services and consultancy ▪ Social inclusion/participation, active citizenship ▪ Arts incl. culture, theatre, play, music
<i>Fields of Learning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Societal/economic exchange and consultancy ▪ Development and continuity of societal values
<i>Knowledge & Learning Exchange/F low between the target group(s)</i>	Predominantly 'downstream' i.e. older to younger but with strong elements of balanced and/or bi-directional interactions e.g. through group discussions of the contemporary witnesses with the younger audience
<i>Interactions between the target group(s)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ one-to-one ▪ one-to-many ▪ physical/offline interaction
<i>Categories of the learning activity</i>	<p>Non-formal</p> <p><u>Comments/Description:</u> Temporary witnesses are invited by the teachers to complement or accompany school lessons, they explain certain events they witnessed in Berlin to journalists, authors etc.</p>
<i>OECD/De SeCo Competences addressed by the CS</i>	<p>2 = Competence Category 2: Interacting in Heterogeneous Groups</p> <p>2.1 = The ability to relate well to others</p> <p>2.2 = The ability to cooperate</p> <p>2.3 = The ability to manage and resolve conflicts</p> <p>3 = Competence Category 3: Acting Autonomously</p> <p>3.1 = The ability to act within the big picture</p>
<i>EC Key Competences addressed by the CS</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communication in the mother tongue ▪ Interpersonal and civic competences ▪ Cultural awareness

Success factors and barriers of the CS

The main success factor of the Contemporary Witnesses Exchange is the offer of contemporary education aimed at supporting the dialogue between the generations. The older people benefit from the initiative by staying in contact with younger people and by knowing their memories are useful and meaningful for new generations. The young people get a lively impression of history and get to know individually experienced historical events or periods. The Contemporary Witnesses Exchange Association therefore contributes to intergenerational learning areas of history, reminiscence and to the preservation of cultural heritage and memory.

The ZZB more particularly strives to enhance the awareness of potential users, especially schools and teachers in Berlin.

Another success factor is the motivating power of personally and individually incorporated experience of history and its transmission to younger generations.

A hindering factor is the current shortage of funds and the search for sponsors, which has to be intensified in the nearby future.

A substantial problem is the increasing age of the temporary witnesses, especially of those who experienced the Weimar Republic and the NS regime. Therefore the ZZB started to produce CDs, DVDs and video clips with the memories of the oldest temporary witnesses increasingly accessible through the online service 'Contemporary Pictures' (<http://www.zeitbilder.info>).

Results of the CS

Specific outputs of the initiative are books, other publications (e.g. the above mentioned 'Zeitzeugenbriefe'). A list of the publications can be found on the website (http://www.zeitzeugenboerse.de/5_pub.htm).

Further outputs are audio and video files, which are produced in order to conserve the memories of the very old temporary witnesses (<http://www.zeitbilder.info>).

There are up-to-now no systematic evaluations of the work of the ZZB available. The feedback of the target groups is, however, very positive. Especially students who were not very interested in history before mentioned that the personal witnessing has opened their eyes for historical events.

There is no formal qualification or certificate available.

The participants benefit in manifold ways from the activities of the ZZB: They get higher social competences, those threatened by exclusion are included, prejudices against certain age, population groups or nations are diminished, active citizenship is enhanced. Altogether a process of social and societal learning is initiated.

Some of the participants reported that a meeting with the contemporary witnesses really influenced their lives, because it opened their eyes to a new understanding of certain historical facts and, thus, also influenced their social and political awareness and acting in the present.