00:13 Speaking about volunteerism in Russia what usually is meant is young people volunteering.

00:22. While this topic is indeed important, the global (and Russian) trend of demographic ageing prompts us to turn towards the potential of older population.

00:33 With the right attitude and policy senior citizens can greatly contribute to the society and evidently become an advantage and a resource for it.

00:46 What often prevents from active ageing are stereotypes.

00:50 According to the research by National Research University Higher School of Economics the role of older people is seen differently by representatives of different generations.

01:00 Almost 30% of them think that the elderly are a burden to society.

01:06 More than 60% are believe that older persons can be only active at home and inside the family.

01:12 17% think that they are passive and do nothing useful.

01:17 Fortunately, the opinions of older persons differ (especially those already involved in NGOs' activities): 86% of them are sure they can be useful for the society.

01:30 The experience of Organization of Retired Persons “Wisdom Ripening”, Bashkortostan also shows that the stereotypes may be overcome.

01:40 Our organization was founded with the idea that older people are a resource.

01:45 They do not need that much help but guidance and opportunities to unleash the priceless potential they have.

02:01 Practically all our projects are built on volunteers.

02:10 When we plan our activities, we first of all rely on the experience and engagement of our members, who are all older people.

02:18 All important decisions are made by the member voting and the board, which consists of the seniors as well.

02:34 One of the long- term projects launched with the help of volunteers is the Third –Age University.

02:40 It is based on partnership with the local schools in Tuymazy and is coordinated by the volunteer efforts of the organization's members.

02:43 Schools provide with the premises and some teachers.

02:48 However, all the logistics is done by the older volunteers. Moreover, most teachers now are older volunteers from the organization's members.

02:55 The visitors noticed that my older students are so active and that they have so much energy

03: 02 And that they want to know everything and roller skate.

03: 08 I have a DVD with our active seniors which I also demonstrate to my young students.

03: 15 They asked a wise man how he obtained his wisdom and he said Ï am learning from my students»

That is what I do too. I show, I teach, and we talk. The effect of our communications is enormous!

Another long- term project is “TV studio 50+” organized together with the TV company «Tuymazy».

A group of volunteers, members of organization “Wisdom Ripening” have studied the basics of journalism and camerawork

Currently 12 volunteers regularly participate in the TV studio «50+», which prepares TV shows and programs on the topics interesting for older people and for the population of the town.

They also make video-history of the organization's projects and a chronicles about the veterans of the World War II.

TV studio «50+» was founded in 2007 and ever since our only and all time partner in this is LLC Tuymazy Television Center

I think for them it is first of all a return to active social participation

Besides, by getting involved in a television creation process these people feel that they are a part of society, which needs them.

TV Studio participants learn basics of Television programs production.

Chief editor of the Television Center volunteers to teach them these basics.

Moreover, the center provides the «TV 50+» with all the facilities and equipment needed for the TV production.

The Tuymazy municipality also helped to buy a professional camera.

First of all I want the «TV 50 +» participants to learn how to make TV shows and news so that they could make it themselves and tell the stories important for them for others to hear.

And for that they have to learn how to make the plot, how to interview people, how to use the camera and how to edit the video.

By now I think they are quite ok with writing stories and shooting videos. We'll continue with editing and polish the skills.

The skills the seniors have learned they have been successfully using in practice.

Every Thursday a TV show «50+» is aired. It's the result of hard work of those seniors.

Why do they do that?

It's a wonderful opportunity to express our ideas and involve more volunteers in our movement.

It is especially important for us since we participate in the World Health Organisation's «Age-friendly Cities project».

Our TV studio allows us to cover urgent problems and interview government members and those who are responsible for solving them, thus improving the situation in the city.

And our senior citizens take most active part in the project..

It is not easy for them. It is difficult to carry the camera, there is a lot of work to prepare a good program.

But I think we have already reached a very good level. The show is aired every second Thursday, it is very good quality.

The future of the program depends on them. If they work hard enough, we will continue.

All the now TV journalists a few years ago had no idea about television production.

For example Rosa Ziganshina before retirement was an insurance agent.

But she is very enthusiastic about TV journalism now, she takes on the most challenging tasks.

«I want to help, I want to help the city, and I want to help older people and younger people, and those who have no other help»

Critical reports, and stories about active seniors – every issue contains 5-6 pieces. They are not easy for the seniors. Some of them had never used a computer let alone a video camera before they came to study television.

But they do not give up as they consider it important to use this unique opportunity to show the importance of the older generation in the society.

Following the example of “Age Concern” Ukraine we launched a volunteer practice of older adults serving other «less fortunate» older adults.

Here the volunteer group provides support for the «older old» people, who live alone, or are fragile and are well enough to participate in activities outside of home.

Our volunteers come for a visit and a chat with a cup of tea, which they help to make.

This helps to compensate for the lack of communication and prevent social isolation.

Also this group organizes trips to an outside of town «Home for the Elderly».

Here live older people who have no relatives alive to support them and cannot stay at home any more.

They live on a government welfare and do not have many opportunities for entertainment.

Volunteers bring them handmade gifts and prepare dance and vocal shows for them in the town of Kakrybashevo.

«My group consists of 20 people. Each of them takes care of two other older persons, not from our organization, but from outside, older people and people with disabilities.

We talk, tell them about our organization, help to buy groceries, if needed, tell about movies and plays we have seen.

The project “Grannies volunteer for children” supported by the President grant in 2010 provides opportunities to use rich pedagogical potential of older people while they help children with disabilities and «difficult» background to learn and develop.

First volunteers took a two- month course in pedagogy and psychology of «special children».

Now they meet with the children with special needs twice a week to play, draw, talk and study according to the plan, made together with a psychologist and a social worker.

Sometimes they also have to informally teach their not quite successful parents how to cope with their children and how to deal with all kind of difficult situations in life.

This work is continued now with the support from local sponsors.

«She comes and helps me to play and styudy with me». Do you like it? Yes

The child was 6 years old. He could only explain things by gestures.

At first it was all new and difficult for us, but little by little with the help of social worker and a psychologist we started to count, then say easy words, and in the end he started talking in short sentences»

Another initiative to mention is an environmental project.

Every spring older volunteers organize city green areas cleaning.

It’s both an ecological and intergenerational project as schoolchildren and college students are involved in it together with the seniors.

They can watch and imprint the values of volunteering work and care of the city and environment.

It is great that we have been able to keep the wonderful tradition of the spring cleanings «subbotniks».

They help develop the love for your hometown.

Seniors from the Third Age University met early morning.

We came here for the «subbotnik» so that our city is always clean and nice, because we live here, we want to live well in it.

This park as most other areas and buildings around was constructed by hands of the today's pensioners.

But today it looks really bad. Few people think about it and know that poliestirol bottles take a thousand years to decay, cans take up to 500 years, nylon takes up to 40 years

Work became even more vigourous when students from the Ufa State Technical University came to help.

My name is Ruslan and today we came to clean and help the seniors to make the city to look cleaner.

Seniors worked as usually scrupulously, looked under each little shrub and could not understand how at all it was possible to get all the rubbish there

God created the Earth so that we live here in this big house and enjoy it.

We have cleaned here, but this trash can not be taken to the moon, it will all go to the waste deposit.

How to make people to toss around less rubbish?

May be we should raise fines and take measures?

What kind of measures?  
To search for them and fine

My grandson is three years old, he lives in Oktyabrsky. Once I came to visit and saw him throwing a piece of paper package on the ground, I told him not to do so and showed a trash bin.

Next time when I visited him, he saw some rubbish on the ground and he asked me «Why did they throw it like that? There's a bin really close by»

The old and the young worked hand in hand. Students carried the bags full of trash and seniors picked up the trash. The memory about the good deed is in the photo.

One more exciting form of volunteering is participation of the seniors in the WHO Global Age-Friendly Cities Project at the local level.

The project work is based on the joint effort of older volunteers and local officials to discuss problems and search for solutions.

This requires from seniors to reveal in full their civic potential, identify causes of problems and suggests solutions, as well as contribute their time and effort to the improvement of the lives of older people in the city.

«We have had a meeting at the deputy head of the municipality Sergey Podoprihin, where we discussed the plan of work, the work of our working groups with the work groups of the city.

All the work group leaders of our organization were included in the working groups of the city.

All the initiatives coming from the seniors are supported by the municipality administration, we try to help with the premises and everything else.

Volunteering brings new colors to the life of an older person and people around him.

A wonderful example of this phenomenon is one of «Wisdom Ripening»'s volunteers - Usman Azhbiev.

After retirement, many people think that life ended. They don't know what to do.

Quite often they fall ill and think only about their illnesses because of idleness, but not in case of Usman Azhbiev. He started a new life instead.

Usman Azhbiev joined the organization and since then he has become one of its most active members.

«What are you doing now?» «I am skimming the video from the celebration of the «Women's Day»

He is learning things he dreamed about when he was younger. He studies computing, camerawork, visits Dance and Drama Studios , plays chess, etc. Step by step he has become involved in organizing htings.

«Usman Umarovich is one of the best organizers.»

He organizes walking tours for seniors – hiking, picking mushrooms and berries, medicinal herbs, fishing trips in winter – ski trips etc.

He is also a leader of a theatre group. He writes scripts and stages them. Last time the group performed his play at the women's day celebration “A Lottery” Everybody loved it.

«What if I win?»- «Do you really believe in that»? I do not buy lottery just for fun!»

Usman Azhbiev is the most busy and active and busy pensioner, but despite that he finds time for the family, children and grandchildren.

He’s got 4 granddaughters and 1 grandson. He also takes care about his garden about his garden, vegetable garden, which feeds the whole family all year-round on environmentally friendly vegetables.

Dear pensioners! If you want to forget about all diseases, if you want to lead a healthy lifestyle and be respected by your children and grandchildren as Usman Azhbiev- follow his example –Join our organization for retired persons “Wisdom Ripening”

Other examples of seniors' volunteer activities may be found in other organizations in Russia.

Overall, NGOs are far ahead of the governmental services in this concern.

They have long realized the importance of volunteerism of the seniors and are working hard on involving them as volunteers in their activities.

We hope that the state will also soon understand the potential of older adults and will not only concentrate on providing basic services for them, but will also take care of developing opportunities for active ageing for the benefit of everyone in a community.