



„Hello Granny, I need money!“

Educational theatre, entertainment and information to protect older people from scams by false grandchildren and other scammers

European Crime Prevention Award 2016 (ECPA) – Crimes committed against older people –

Type of Crime Prevention

Educational Theatre

Project Launch

Spring 2012. The project is still running.

Level of Effect/Target Group

The project is targeted at senior citizens aged 60+. Performances take place in district town halls, senior community centres or at church related events, to name a few.

Project Participants

The project was developed in joint cooperation by the theatre pedagogue Allan Mathiasch; Stuttgart Police Department, crime prevention unit and the CID section in charge; the community crime prevention unit of the City of Stuttgart; BW-Bank, and the Förderverein Sicheres und Sauberes Stuttgart e. V. (Friends for a Safe and Clean Stuttgart e. V.) as main sponsors.

Scope

Initially, 20 performances throughout Stuttgart's city districts were scheduled. Meanwhile, the play has been performed 117 times in Stuttgart and in its neighboring communities.

Costs

The costs per performance vary between EUR 790 and EUR 890 subject to the honorariums of the performers.

Evaluation

Theresa Siegler, University of Applied Sciences Kehl, bachelor's thesis on the subject of „Theaterpädagogik in der Kriminalprävention – Ist Theaterpädagogik ein geeignetes Mittel zum Schutz von Senioren bei Betrug?“ („Educational theatre in crime prevention – is educational theatre an effective approach to protect older people from scams?“)

Project Description

„Guess who's calling ...“: Scammers use these or similar phrases when contacting mainly older people with the caller claiming to be a relative, grandson or granddaughter or a family friend. They claim they are in some kind of trouble or in financial distress and ask for large sums of money right away and because of clever psychological tricks very often they are successful. In some instances senior citizens were taken for more than EUR 20,000. Once they realize that they have been victims of a scam and that their savings have been gone forever, older people very often react with shame, withdrawal and sadness.

The educational approach of the „Hello Granny, I need money!“ project is to alert senior citizens aged 60+ about scamming practices. By actively engaging the audience in the performance on stage, their mind is sharpened to identify this type of crime. Participants feel appreciated as their personal fears are taken seriously and their assertiveness to protect themselves against „grandparent scams“ and other situations increases.

The performers respond flexibly to the wishes and needs of the participants and are able to give performances of many different scam practices and the best ways of protection against them. Thanks to the close contact with the specialists of the CID section in charge, they are always kept up-to-date.

The evaluation has shown that this project has had a lasting effect on the target group of the project.

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