



Didier & Marion Cultural Villages of Europe

- Jon Prime time with Didier and Marion. Didier, first of all, as President could you just tell us a little bit about the idea of the Cultural Villages of Europe? Whose idea was it, how did it start?
- Didier The first us.... idea was to help people to meet each other in Europe, so we based the network on exchange with the population. So each year for twelve years from '99 to 2011 each village from the network invited all the other village to come to him and ahh, to show each other villages and other people how they live.
- Jon When they stay in Mellionnec, when the foreign visitors are staying in Mellionnec, where do they stay, in a hotel or...?
- Didier When they came in 2000, they came to live with French people, so they came to their house. So we organised a welcome, uh, in, uh, in each houses. We ask people to receive, uh, a couple or two friends, and, uh in each house we welcome two people. So they lived for three days in the French family.
- Jon And they have a better idea of real French life?
- Didier Yeah, they can have a look to how we organise life, the family life. How we organise our house, how we, we live.
- Jon Good idea. What are the actual aims of the scheme?
- Didier We want to go on in that kind of exchange. We want people meet each other so that they can, they can know each other and ,uh.... That when we, we want to organise the idea of Europa. We are not people who are decided anything but we want that French people and European people can meet and know each other by meeting.
- Jon A previous exchange visit was in Porrùà in northern Spain. Here a group of villagers are comparing their life histories.

We started off each thinking about a theme that we developed more or less. Once we got to Porrùà, we began to talk about our themes, and by the end, we all deviated from our subjects, because there was a great empathy in the group, as if we had known each other forever. It started with a feeling of confidentiality, rather than the themes that we had prepared. The extraordinary thing was that our lives seemed as if intermingled with the lives of the people of Porrùà, because of immigration, because of work, because of

our rural way of life.

My name is Marie Carmen. | live in Porrúa. I was in Switzerland, where I learned what little French I speak. And I am very pleased to come here. It's a little village where animals are raised; there are more cows in this village than any other in the whole of Asturias.

Jon Marion, can I just ask you, firstly, what is your role?

Marion Uh, I am employee in Cultural Villages association so I work to organise those meetings here in Central Brittany and outside when we travel.

Jon What kind of organisation does it take? Is it travel or accommodation or just finding the people to take part?

Marion Oh, it's....well when we host people we have to find, uhh, host families there and to organise volunteers to make a nice welcome SO.....

Jon How do you actually select the people? You must have lots of volunteers to choose from, or is it...?

Marion We don't select volunteers, the people come if they want to share something with your friends. They come if they want and we, we welcome everybody who wants to, to discover Europe and who has people.

Jon Didier, again, as president, I ought to ask you this one, perhaps. Who funds the project?

Didier Uh, it started between Denmark and the Netherlands, uh, by a, an exchange between two, two men, one from Tommerup in Denmark and one from Wijk aan Zee in the Netherlands and, uh, they want to react to the idea the cultural capital. So they said 'There are so many things interesting in my village that I want that all the people who could come to my village and they could meet me, meet my friend and see how I live in my village.' So it was just an invitation, 'come to my village'. That, uh,.....

Jon That's how it started. OK but who actually provides the money?

Marion there are the, uh, region of Brittany, Europe, the departement of Côtes d'Armor and the community of town Kreiz Breizh and, of course, the participants who participate.

Didier We can be help, of course by Europe also, the UE.

Jon But, sorry, when you say you could be helped, are you helped by..?

Didier We are.

Jon OK so there are five different levels for development.

Marion Yes, Europe, region, departement, community common and the participants.

Jon Fine, OK, thank you and good luck with this year's venture. Thank you both very much.

Didier Thank you.

Jon Nice talking to you.

