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NET AGE project

Support network for quality ageing

Promote regional social development encouraging NETWORKING of relevant public-volunteering stakeholders to boost innovation in the delivering social-health-care services for AGEing people

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This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the IPA Adriatic Cross-Border Cooperation Programme. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of NETAge partnership and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the IPA Adriatic Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Authorities



LEAD APPLICANT:



PROJECT PARTNERS:



ASSOCIATE:



Introduction

Reasons why the project is needed

NET-Age project, funded in 2012 with € 1.880.437,49 euro by the CBC IPA Adriatic programme, aims at strengthening the sustainable development capabilities of the Adriatic region and the demographic process focusing on innovative social and health services to favour active ageing and independent living of elderly. One of the most profound demographic transformations is the population ageing that is deeply impacting on the social, economic and cultural spheres of every Adriatic regions.

EU Member States, but also Candidate Countries and Potential Candidate Countries in the Adriatic region, are taking note of the growing number of elderly people among their own citizens. Due to the long part of life people spend in the ageing, population ageing is both individual and social phenomenon. From the social point of view it risks putting an additional strain on the economy, society and sustainability of public finance because of the need of assistance and social-health care services. At the same time elderly people are often still active. Today ageing demands to change the cultural point of view and look at elderly as active. Nonetheless, the last UN report on poverty points out that the active life is one of the most vulnerable periods of life. Overall, the exclusion from active life is the most slippery slope next to the abyss of misery: this requires a guarantee of new policies for active, healthy and independent ageing.

On the whole NET-Age recognizes the lack of adequate social and health services for elderly people that negatively affects the effectiveness of policies and the equal access to them while stress the central role of volunteering. In the meantime, other problems affect the quality and effectiveness of policies and services aimed at elderly people such as:

- Lack of coordination among public and private stakeholders;
- Absence of an Open Method of Coordination in the policy definition and implementation;
- Lack of adequate trained civil servants and volunteers to efficiently face up the challenges related to ageing;
- Lack of information and data on the social welfare, health care and elderly assistance.

Thus, NET-Age represents the opportunity to develop new policies in the field of assistance and to deliver common answers to the population ageing.



What is demographic situation

The structure of age pyramid in the EU Member States, Candidate Countries and Potential Candidate Countries shows a deep generational imbalance. According to data from the World Bank, the demographic situation of the NET-Age partner countries shows an increase in the proportion of people age 65 and over, while the proportion of young people (age 0–14) has fallen. Also, all the partners in the last years have increased the age-dependency ratio that measures the ratio of dependents – people younger than 15 or older than 64 – to the working age population (aged 15–64).

Behind the new form of the age pyramid are different causes both natural and social: the continuous increase in life expectancy, the low fertility rate, the high rate of migration. In the last twenty years the life expectancy has increased in all the partner countries from five to seven years, while the fertility rate continues to be lower than the replacement fertility rate of 2.1 children per women. The recent migration process from Balkan countries to EU is more difficult to analyse but it is likely to have had consequences on the demographic situation of these countries.

What we expect to change

Specific objectives of NET-Age project are:

- To improve the coordination among the public-private sector (NGOs, volunteering), encouraging them to work in partnership and deliver innovative social and health services for elderly to guarantee active, healthy and independently ageing;
- To increase and favour the development of capacities, competences and skills of public institutions and of volunteering staff thanks to the investment in human capital, encouraging networking mobility, staff exchange, joint training session, non-formal learning activities;
- To strengthen the democratic process at local level, capacity building through the development of new institutional framework where public and volunteering actors stably collaborate and programme social policies and services implementing the Open Method of Coordination;
- To increase the sustainability of the social-health systems maintaining balance among quality of services, reasonable level of expenditure and equal access;
- To enhance the level of awareness and information on the services and policies aimed at the elderly.

NET-Age project expects to improve social-health policies starting from a new definition of ageing and accomplishing a different coordination among the public and private sector in service provision for the elderly.



Project description

NET–Age activities

The NET-Age activities put in place the basis of the Adriatic CBC Network where public and non-profit stakeholders from each region work in close collaboration to deliver innovative social/health services to older people. They steadily exchange experiences and know-how, continuously increasing the competencies and skills and in the long term reduce territorial inequalities in the Adriatic area. Starting from the identification of the lack of cooperation among public/private actors, NET-Age project overcomes the obstacles to integrate policies in a multidisciplinary approach, around a fundamental networking activities summarized in the JOINT ACTION PLAN (JAP). The JAP includes the main actions to be realized at a cross border level: specific training modules for non-profit (volunteering) associations and for policymakers to support the institutional consolidation and capacity building process. Mobility Programme is also part of the Joint Action Plan and will allow the participants coming from the 6 involved countries to have a direct knowledge of different Social policies in the field of the involvement of volunteering in health care and assistance-home care for elderly. Their exchange of experience and transfer of competencies will be facilitated in order to capitalize their approach. During the NET-Age project beneficiaries from each Region will implement at local level a series of activities using bottom-up approach, stimulating the debate on social issues, analysing the framework of the current social - health policies and implementing a PILOT ACTION to test the joint planning and delivering of social/health services to elderly.

Who is participating in NET-Age?

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The Lead Partner of the project is Marche Regional Authority-Implementation of Social Planning Unit-Social Policies Department from Italy.

It is supported in the project management and coordination by SVIM, its Regional Development Agency, acting as Technical Secretariat in the project, working closely with the Marche Region in the project management and coordination as well as giving support to the consortium in the daily project implementation. Other project partners are: from Italy the Volunteer Association of Marche Region (AVM) and Emilia Romagna Region – Department for Promotion of Social Policies and integration of immigration, volunteering, association and Third Sector; City of Split and the Association MI (Udruga MI) Split from Croatia; the Albanian Regional Council of Lezha and Caritas Albania; from Montenegro, the Institute of Public Health and the Association for Democratic Prosperity – Zid; the Provincial Bureau for Social Welfare and the Novi Sad Humanitarian Centre from Serbia, and, finally, the Municipality of Kanal ob Soči and Slovenian Federation of Pensioners' Associations (ZDUS) from Slovenia.



Associate Partner is CEV-European Volunteer Centre, located in Brussels, a network of over 80 national, regional, and local volunteer centres and volunteer support agencies across Europe.

Role of project partners

Marche Regional Authority- Department Implementation of Social Planning Unit-Social Policies Department

The Lead Partner plays the role of technical-scientific and administrative-financial coordinator of the project supported by Sviluppo Marche spa - SVIM that hosts the NET-Age Technical Secretariat.

The Social Policy Service counts on about twenty five employees and is organized in three sections: the "Social Policy Service", the "Social Programming Unit" and the "Childhood, Family, Charities and Third Sector Registers". These thematic areas work on the planning of interventions to specific target groups (elderly, disables, children, families, immigrants...). The "Social Programming Unit", which is directly involved in the project, is committed to the coordination of local actions and the planning of interventions and approaches to activate social Welfare policies, with particular attention to Elderly, Poverty and Immigration.

Concerning the elderly care policy, it represents one of the top political priorities of the Regional Government. Indeed, about 24% of residents in the Region are over 65 years old and the number of elderly and related ratio will increase in the next decades. Regional policies aim to guarantee high quality of life of elderly, to support them in daily life, care and assistance. The elderly care policy has been enforced recently and this has not enabled the regional administration to adapt to the characteristics and needs of such a costly and complex area of work.

26% of people aged 65 and over, receive home care assistance by volunteering people (charity, religious and NGOs associations, civil service people etc...).

In some cases, older people provide unpaid and volunteering care to other family members or elderly people. Volunteering associations actively contribute to active and healthy ageing. The collaboration with volunteering associations has been improved and NET-Age project represents a real opportunity in the achievement of this goal.

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CSV Marche

CSV is a Volunteering Service Centre for supporting, development and qualification for volunteering associations in the territory of Marche Region. The elected board is composed only by volunteers and it defines the political guidelines of volunteering associations in the region. CSV Marche is a federation of 400 volunteering associations and it has increased its knowledge and long-lasting contacts with more or less all the volunteering associations in the region.

Thanks to its experience CSV Marche keeps the role of local partner in the building up of public-private partnership to deliver more efficient social services and it knows elderly users' needs. Thus, its role is fundamental in the future application of OMC and bottom-up approach. Moreover, CSV Marche guarantees a high impact of the NET-Age results on the territory and a high involvement of volunteering associations in the project activities.



City of Split

City of Split is a local government, which beside all other activities, ensures, promotes and enables both social-health and non-profit organizations.

Representatives from 5 public institutions involved in elderly care, participated in the Mobility program organized in Slovenia, Serbia and Italy. In cooperation with Association MI, 4 local workshops were organized and attended by representatives from public and non-profit sector. Local SWOT analysis on social care for the elderly was created and recommendations for future activities were developed.

The project has been proven as important in establishing cooperation with non-profit sector, updating SWOT analysis on social services for the elderly and building recommendations for future actions.

Association MI

Association MI is a non-profit and non-governmental organization established in Split, Croatia, in 1996. In its initial stage MI was connected to the program for refugees and displaced persons, supported by an international organization International Rescue Committee. Later MI expanded to other needs of the community: care for the elderly, the problem of suicide, poverty, and development of volunteering and civil society support centre. Association MI has established three separate organizations: Foundation "Kajo Dadić" whose activities support students with low income families and civil society development; non-profit social institution: "Mi centre for care and assistance" which provides non-institutional services to older people and social enterprise Green Network. In NET- Age project, they have active role in dissemination and promotion of all project activities and results as well as maintain communication between partners.

The Region Council of Lezhe

Regional Council of Lezhe, NET-Age public partner in Albania, coordinates the work between the central and local institutions in order to solve problems that deal with public and social services.

The presence of Region Council of Lezhe represents an added value for the project as well as for the Caritas Albania and territory. Thanks to its institutional role it ensures the correct achievement of project results and implementation of project activities, ensuring that activities reach out the target group who would potentially benefit more from engagement by the local community, sparking the creation of community networks and groups that provide opportunities for active ageing and social participation, to motivate, encourage and organize people within their community to be more active and healthy, building social and political network with private-volunteering stakeholders. Owing to its long experiences in the project implementation of social services and as institutional partner it plays a key role in all project activities (in particular in the definition of recommendations and white paper, to strengthen capacities, competences and skills of public institution, to improve the sustainability of social

protection system, to favour development and spread of innovative social and health services for ageing people to guarantee active, healthy and independently ageing.

Caritas Albania

Caritas Albania contributes to the development of an efficient strategy for the provision of social-health care services towards elderly people. It manages a huge network of health centres (almost 50 health centres) placed throughout in AL and it is present in Region of Lezhe through the implementation of several projects addressed toward the elderly. Owing to its 17-years of experience, Caritas Albania plays an active role in the implementation of NET-Age project.

Institute for Public health

Institute of Public Health, located in Montenegro, as a preventive-medical-health organization at tertiary level of health care system, covers: monitoring, researching and studying of population health and health culture, influence of environment on protection of population health, causes, spreading and prevention of infectious diseases, factors of risk of chronic non-infectious diseases and other diseases of high social-medical significance as well as organizations, working and development of health service and proposing and caring out appropriate measures for prevention and improvement of population health. Institute has significant influence on defining health care policy and especially vulnerably population groups, such as the elderly. It is the only institution of public health in Montenegro, which task is to, based on the principle of multi-sectorial collaboration monitors and evaluates organization of health care in several respects. Institution employs around ten university lecturers, in both qualitative and quantitative terms, has the authority to influence... and initiate activities aimed at elderly care. The results obtained during the project will directly be used to define normative acts concerning the protection of elderly and start new activities in accordance with the expressed needs, which will be defined during the implementation.

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Association for Democratic Prosperity - Zid

Association for Democratic Prosperity - Zid (ADP - Zid) is a civil society organization established in 1996 based in Podgorica, Montenegro. ADP – Zid is working on programs oriented toward social responsibility of all actors in the community. Also, they are working in different projects and activities within the following programs: Voluntary Service of Montenegro; Community Development; Social responsibility; Youth and active citizenship; International cooperation and EU integration; Legislation and civil society development. ADP-Zid is working on the development of volunteerism and voluntary policies since 2000. Since 2000 they are operating as a National Volunteer Centre.



The Provincial Institute of Social Welfare, Provincial Bureau for Social Welfare

NET- Age activities and objectives are fully in line with the activities of the Provincial Institute of Social Welfare. Activities of the Institute, among others, are to promote the development of social services, technical support providers, capacity building providers and potential providers of services through the implementation of professional training or any other type of promotion programs related to the development of the social protection system in Serbia.

Novi Sad Humanitarian Centre (NSHC)

The Serbian Novi Sad Humanitarian Centre (NSHC) is a non-profitable, charitable organization which contributes to creating a humane society by providing support for the vulnerable and marginalized groups and encouraging civil activism, research and education.

NSHC contributes to the NET- Age project with its human and technical resources, and know-how gained in previous projects with the elderly and in the area of social policy reform. NSHC keeps the role of a local partner in the building up of public-private partnership to deliver more efficient social services as aimed by Net-Age.

Municipality of Kanal ob Soči

The Municipality of Kanal ob Soči is a Slovenian local community which is in charge of training and education, social care, support for families, social endangerment, support for disabled persons, etc.). It likewise ensures, promotes and enables both social-health and voluntary institutions.

Within the NET-Age project, it played the role of connecting all organizations which are involved in social and health care especially in care for the elderly. Municipality, with its staff, studies, analysis, has contributed to the goal of project NET-Age – improve the level of care for the elderly in its area.

Slovenian Federation of Pensioners' Associations (ZDUS)

ZDUS is a volunteer organization which brings together more than half of retirees of Slovenia. Within the project they were responsible for producing the regional SWOT analysis, organization of local knowledge exchange workshops and in partnership with the local public partner, they were hosting the mobility and training program.

Emilia-Romagna Regional Authority -Department for Promotion of Social Policies and integration of immigration, volunteering, association and Third Sector

Emilia-Romagna Region contributed to capacity building actions by transferring their experiences in promoting active ageing specifically as far as voluntary service linked to elderly needs are concerned. Emilia-Romagna hosted a mobility round and took active part in the project actions transferring and improving the bottom up approach. The Department for social health integration policies related to non self-sufficiency has more than thirty years of experience in designing and implementing social and welfare policies at regional level. The Region is recognized as one of the most advanced Italian regions in the welfare sector specifically as far as the dialogue between public institutions and the third sector; voluntary services are also concerned.

The NET-Age cross-border SWOT analysis

The WP3 objective is to analyse the state of the art of the Net-Age regions to enhance the level of awareness and information on the services and policies aimed at the elderly, the role of volunteering in each territory, to evaluate if there is a balance between quality of social-health services-users access-level of expenditures and to avoid in the long term duplication of efforts in the delivering of services, improve their quality and innovativeness, increase the accessibility, save money and strength human resources involved.

In order to identify the common strengths and potential barriers, the Institute for Public Health in Podgorica, with the assistance of ADP-Zid, has realized a cross-border SWOT analysis. Results are based on the recommendations for further project implementation while the report is based on synergies, complementarities and cooperation possibilities of the Net-Age regions.

Common STRENGTHS in:

- Social (and economical) value of volunteer work and active citizenship;
- Creation and development of associations of family members pooling together caregivers working with specific target groups;
- Home care for the elderly is one of the few services where volunteers are engaged;
- Decent institutional social welfare system - homes for the elderly.

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Common WEAKNESSES in:

- The Municipalities do not have sufficient resources to finance ongoing services: where home care services are established as project activities, their sustainability is questionable;
- There is insufficient inter-sector collaboration at the local level between the social welfare and health care systems;
- There is insufficient inter-sector collaboration at the local and the provincial level between the public, private, and civil sector;
- The aging of the population constitutes a challenge for us because it affects the pension system, health services and economic productivity;
- Lack of information system in data gathering and distribution for the elderly, lack of central data base with information about social services;
- Old and infirm persons cannot use special subsidies and services and therefore they are at higher risk of poverty.

Common OPPORTUNITIES in:

- Intergenerational partnerships and collaboration through the education system (e.g. Adult Education, etc.).
- Increasing awareness of needs for joint cooperation of all stakeholders from all sectors:



And common THREATS in:

- Social and demographic changes: increased number of elderly people left alone, loosening up of family ties, sparse relationships, care responsibilities left to the families;
- Fear stemming from the social and economic crisis, as well as from the perceived high levels of petty crime;
- Problems of the elderly are not a priority in national policies and plans.

Comprehensive analysis resulted in recommendations that will improve cooperation between the partners and increase the quality of services for the elderly.

Recommendation 1: The adoption of common strategies at each level in the field of health and social care of the elderly.

It is necessary to include different segments with mandatory involvement of voluntary organizations and CSOs.

Recommendation 2: Implement mechanisms to ensure that all stakeholders are involved. Involvement of the public, public-private and the private sector as well as voluntary organizations.

Recommendation 3: Planned activities must be aligned with the needs of the elderly and adapted to existing capabilities of countries. Activities should be planned in line with the capabilities of each country, financial and administrative. The elderly people must participate in the definition of their needs.

Recommendation 4: Improve cooperation between all actors involved in the care for the elderly. Cooperation between actors is carried out through the exchange of ideas and good practice.

Recommendation 5: Improving inter-regional cooperation. In accordance with the existing opportunities of countries, good practice is important for volunteer activities related to the care of the elderly.

Recommendation 6: Strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations (CSO's, volunteer organizations). Raising awareness of the population regarding the importance of volunteer work and dissemination of information on volunteerism and volunteer training/education.

Recommendation 7: Common training program for volunteers and professionals.

The NET-Age Joint Action Plan (JAP)

The WP4 is equipped with an instrument called JAP (Joint Action Plan) that includes actions, such as training for volunteers/members of volunteering organizations, for civil servants and policymakers, joint mobility and the drafting of a document of intent (Memorandum of Understanding - MoU).

The JAP, approved among all the partners, is composed of 4 pillars, three of which are implemented at the cross-border level and one mainly at the local level:

1. Side local accompanying measures backing the envisaged actions aim at laying the foundations for future EU membership of the potential candidate countries (CC /PPC) and in general to promote the Open method of coordination (OMC) as a method of social policy programs;
2. Training program;
3. Mobility program;
4. Joint activities to promote collaboration Cross border (CB) or meetings on the territories that can serve as guidelines for the implementation and monitoring JAP step-by-step.

These pillars of the JAP are organized in other different actions.

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The first pillar was aimed at preparing the ground for the future accession to EU of CC/ PCC and to foster OMC as method to programming social policies and it is composed of: 4 local knowledge-exchange workshops in each area, open to all stakeholders, to facilitate more focused discussions; a top level conference with policy makers, organized by public partners in partnership with volunteering, to analyse the critical aspects coming out and to propose potential practical steps to policy and decision makers involved; a "White paper" drafted in partnership by public & volunteering actors to outline the results obtained, the criticalities and priorities emerged from mapping, workshops, pilot action and exchange of experience with other FBs; the pilot action implemented in each region to deliver innovative social-health services that make a contribution to active ageing and independent living of the elderly and create a value for money.

The second pillar is the training program. The training sessions aimed at preparing the NET-Age staff to the development of a pilot project, whose purpose is to test the integration between public and private care services for the elderly. As planned in the JAP, there were three training sessions: the first took place in November 2013, in Novi Sad, and was focused on the "European Policies on Ageing"; the second one was in March 2014, in Podgorica, about "Governance of social and health care for the elderly". The third training session was held in September 2014 during the meeting in Kanal ob Soci, and it concerned "Social Planning and EU fund opportunities": it was an opportunity for partners to compare social planning approach and to discuss the possibility of working as a network for future call through the identification of types of call to which participate, the procedures and deadlines.

The third pillar is dedicated to the Mobility programme: an opportunity for formal and informal training through mutual knowledge and exchange of experiences among the participants. Host countries were Serbia, Slovenia and Italy.

Each session, in effect, provided opportunities for training, professional, social and cultural exchanges. The mobility aimed at introducing participants to the local context and its characteristics in terms of policies and services to assist the elderly. The mobility program also included visits to meaningful examples of elderly care service delivery with the aim of knowing projects, methodologies that can be taken as best practices. Finally, a specific social program was organized to strengthen relations among the participants.

100 participants, civil servants and volunteers were selected and participated in the mobility program.

The fourth pillar is dedicated to the networking activities to foster cross-border collaborations, carried out through the organization of specific Expert Group meetings during the Net-Age internal meetings. It aimed at developing skills and expertise of the social operators, civil servants and volunteers involved, to create a CB network among the partner countries, to collect the results of the swot analysis and start a reflection on the basis of them, to develop an integrated and multidisciplinary approach useful to the implementation of the pilot action; to develop measures for future EU membership of the CC/PCC; etc.

The Training Program

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Training in Serbia

Training Program on European Policies in Ageing for the participants of NET-Age was held in Novi Sad on 19 – 20 of November, 2013. The main objectives of the training were to support the participants in understanding the fundamentals and functioning of the European Union, build knowledge on EU relations with the Western Balkans i.e. Stabilisation and Association Process and its instruments, and to offer information on importance of EU policies on ageing (OMC, Active aging, Long term care etc.), public private partnership, so that the participants are able to adequately participate in policy planning and implementation at national and regional level. The training gathered 55 participants from Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania and 2 trainers (Mr. Vladan Jovanović and Ms. Mirjana





Maksimović from Serbia) as well as the NET-Age project team. The participants have shown a high interest and motivation to learn about the main EU institutions and policies, about the key relations governing EU vs. Western Balkan Relations, about the Stabilization and Association process and its instruments and tools on ageing, as well as policy and instruments on public private partnership. Furthermore, an excellent cohesion and networking was built between the participants.

Training in Montenegro

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The training, "Policies and services governance systems addressing the elderly" was held on 18 – 19 of March, 2014 in Podgorica, Montenegro. Training sessions were led by Prof. Dr Aleksandar Dzakula, as main trainer and Prof. Dr. Marta Civljak and Prof. Dr. Tea Vukusic-Rukavina, as assistants. There were 38 participants, and 6 working groups on training topics. Training was divided into the following sessions: stakeholders and setting analysis; needs assessment; optimal model for the project (Evaluation of the evidence based programs); next steps (future plans).

All the sessions were followed by participatory discussion facilitated by all three trainers and all participants were active and interested in the work.

The general impression of the trainer is that the training was very successful and that NET-Age project represents an important and comprehensive project designed to improve overall capacity of the society to face population ageing. Selected methodology that connects public and civil stakeholders from 6 countries opens a broad scope of possible achievements.

Participants were satisfied with the training and came out motivated and with better knowledge on issues related to policies and services governance systems addressing the elderly and best practices and strategies in governance systems.

Training in Slovenia

The third training on the topic of "Social Planning and the possibilities of using European resources" was held on 15-16 of September, 2014 in Slovenia, led by the Municipality of Kanal ob Soci and supported by ZDUS. The topic "Social Policy and the EU Funding" was targeted to a broader group of representatives of the partners and their employees, who are involved in the implementation of social policy. There were 47 participants. The training involved various lecturers with knowledge in the field of EU projects and the representative of the Government Office for Development and Cohesion Policy. Participants have received

new knowledge about the topics regarding social inclusion plan 2014-2020 and the possibility of cross-border cooperation. They also learned about technical and financial aspects of projects financed by European funds, with an emphasis on the social field. Participants were able to get some advice and practical cases studies in the application and management of the projects. In conclusion, the training participants involved in the workshop could test their knowledge in writing of a project proposal and application.

Impressions of participants

The chosen theme was very welcomed as this is the beginning of the new 2014-2020 programming period. The presentation of lecturer Dr. Simona Zavratnik was, in terms of content, exhaustive and professional. She presented the most common traps and mistakes we make in project applications. In a practical part, we tested our knowledge in writing project proposal on a given case. That gave us an instant and objective evaluation of the knowledge and a chance to learn from our own mistakes.

Lora Zimic Mugerli, Municipality of Kanal ob Soci, Slovenia

At the workshop it has been discussed about the topics which are also related with my work. The most interesting and useful for me was a lecture of financial adviser, Mirjana Zelen, of the financial issues regarding the projects funded by EU funds, because it gave me a comprehensive view of EU projects financing.

Andreja Nanut, Municipality of Kanal ob Soci, Slovenia

The Mobility Program

Mobility in Slovenia

The first NET-Age Mobility took place in Goriska region in the beginning of March 2014 and it was attended by 120 participants, members of public and non-governmental institutions from six countries. The goal of Mobility was to present good practices in the hosting project partner countries and to try to transfer and apply them to other project partners' countries. Lecturers and institution representatives gave lectures in the topics of the problems, needs and novelties in the field of geriatric care. The organizers emphasized a specific demography in the Municipality of Kanal ob Soci where the population is growing old. This fact brings along other problematic issues and new situations. Growing rates of dementia, depression, chronic diseases and asbestosis are the major problems in the municipality. Increased need for patronage service is detected because the elders wish to stay at their homes. Organization of asbestosis patients (OZA) was presented at the event as well as an example of an organization that is informing and supporting affected population. The changes in social welfare system caused elderly people quite a big amount of additional problems as they are required to return some of the governmental benefits they were entitled to receive in the past. Because of this fact, many elders are living in very poor conditions. Representative of the Ministry of Labor, Family,



Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and representative of Center of Social work presented the legislation concerning the benefits and social transfers possibilities the citizens have. Volunteers and humanitarian organizations have an important role in the community. Pensioners' association, Caritas and Red Cross were presented in this field. The Mobility participants also had the opportunity to visit two retirement homes, public Retirement home in Nova Gorica and private Retirement home Zavod Pristava in Vipava. They all expressed a great interest in retirement homes because they differ greatly from those in their countries or in some countries they are still developing nets of retirement homes. Special interest was shown by the participants in cross-generation centres: Pri Tinci in Deskle and Hiša sadežev Slovenske filantropije in Vipava. These kinds of centers and events where different generations collaborate together were a novelty for most participants and they were excited and stimulated to apply the practice in their countries. Based on participants' feedback, the Mobility in Slovenia was very successful and has presented a clear picture of elderly care in the country.

Mobility in Serbia

The second mobility event was held from 7 – 11 of April, 2014 in Novi Sad, Serbia. The study visit was attended by 109 representatives of public institutions and civil society organizations from 6 countries participating in the Net-Age project. The hosting organization was the Provincial Institute of Social Welfare and Novi Sad Humanitarian Centre (NSHC). The aim of the visit was to present the social welfare system for the elderly in Serbia, and specifically within the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. On the first day of the event, participants were addressed by the Provincial officials and briefly introduced to the social and health care systems in Serbia. The role of civil society organizations in the social welfare system and the legal framework for volunteerism were also presented by the NGO representatives. On the second day, a training was held on European Union funding opportunities in the field of elderly care. The third and fourth day were spent in visits to institutions and organizations for elderly care in several municipalities in Vojvodina: Gerontology Center, clubs for the elderly, and a private home for the elderly in Subotica; the health care centre and Caritas in Sremska Mitrovica; Gerontology Centre in Ruma; a home for the elderly and shelter for the homeless in Futog; club for the elderly in Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization Novi Sad; and NSHC's club for elderly Roma in Beocin. Although the program was extensive, participants were also taken to



guided tours in Sremska Mitrovica, Petrovaradin fortress and Sremski Karlovci, and Lake Palic near Subotica. Participants have had many opportunities to see how the elderly care system works in Serbia, as well as to meet the country and its people.

Mobility in Italy

From 5 - 9 of May, the third mobility program was held in Emilia-Romagna Region. The aim of the Mobility was to present good practices of the Emilia-Romagna Region to transfer experiences and knowledge on elderly care services and system to the hosted countries. In total 93 participants attended the 5-day of May, 2014, mobility in Emilia-Romagna, of which 84 members of public and non-governmental institutions from five Countries: Slovenia, Serbia, Albania, Croatia, and Montenegro for exchanging experiences and best practices in the field of innovative social-health services addressed to elderly people. Besides working plenary theoretical sessions, the mobility in Italy comprised numerous visits at home care, semi-residential and leisure structures for elderly people in Bologna, Ravenna and Forlì. In particular, the Centro polifunzionale "Cardinal Lercaro" of Asp City of Bologna, the Ancescao of Villa Torchi still in Bologna, the Ipab Zangheri of Forlì and some structures of social cooperative Il Solco (Ravenna) and Asp in Ravenna-Cervia-Russi. Besides, networked services for old people affected by dementia were presented, specifically the "Palestra della Mente" project, an important experience being implemented in Ravenna for a cognitive stimulation of people slightly affected by dementia. The organizers emphasized the specific demographic trend in Emilia-Romagna that makes this region one of the oldest in all Europe. Likewise, they presented the regional experience to set up and integrated social and health system based on the planning and coordinating role of the public (at three different level: regional, area provincial conference and 38 districts), the active role of voluntary sector and the role of public (25%) and private (75%) providers of services. The separation between the planning, commitment and financing role of public authorities from the providing of services (25% from public boards and 75% from private providers mainly no profit) makes clear the different contribution from different actors in the perspectives of a system with a general according "governance". The Mobility was very successful and all participants expressed great interest and shared the experiences from their countries and confirmed the usefulness of the mobility itself for exchanging information in the field concerned.

Impressions of participants

Feedbacks from participants of the mobility programs performed in NET-Age project have been collected. Here is one example:

"As a representative of a public institution, I have had the opportunity to participate in the NET-Age project of Municipality of Kanal ob Soci that has taken part in Emilia-Romagna region.... I was surprised by some very modern day care centres and nursing homes for elderly that offer their clients very nice and friendly environment, full of daylight and space together with professional team. Especially the day centres were great examples of the services designed to keep older people as independent as possible and help them live at their own homes, while encouraging their social inclusion. I have found out that Emilia-Romagna region truly is a great example of best practices in the field of social care for elderly and that emphasizes the active participation of elderly in the community. Also the role of volunteers and voluntary associations involved in the projects for elderly is significant. There are many specific projects; however, I would like to emphasize the project "The Amarcord e Cafè", a meeting place for the social inclusion of people (patients) who suffer from cognitive and memory impairment, and for their relatives and caregivers. While visiting this structure we have had the possibility to sing, play and dance with patients and do the laughter yoga which was an incredible experience... I am very grateful for this experience and it would be a great challenge to apply at least some of the ideas gathered in the mobility project into the local environment".

Roberta Filipič, Municipality of Miren-Kostanjevica, Slovenia



"As a psychologist who works in a Home for the elderly Vita, whose primary job is working with the elderly and the promotion of all forms of care for the elderly, it is logical to get involved in the Net-Age project mobility program. In the end it turned out that the study visits to neighbouring countries in the Adriatic region were really helpful in sharing experiences and learning about the best practices that could be applied in my work.

I participated in two study visits: I travelled to the province of Gorizia, Kanal ob Soci in Slovenia and in Bologna and Ravenna, Italy... The trips were very versatile... there is very big importance of the non-profit sector and volunteers in the provision of social services.These study visits have influenced me to not only be the one that involves volunteers in projects, but also to become one; palliative care as an idea and concept in other countries are in the very beginning: in Croatia, there is already a national development strategy for palliative care and post-graduate education courses in the field of palliative care, and things are much more advanced than in other neighbouring countries. More than in any other field, I think that volunteering is necessary in palliative care. For personal daily work, I have "stolen" some ideas like: therapeutic dogs program, ideas for different workshops, recall group sessions, music and doll therapy and ideas for designing physical space and environment in the Home for the Elderly.".

Ana Drnasin, psychologist, Split, Croatia

"I find participation in the Mobility program in Serbia, Slovenia and Italy and all the realized activities very useful regarding social and health care services for the elderly and the provision of quality services, both institutional and non-institutional aimed to this category of population.

Motivation to participate in the Mobility program within the NET-Age project comes from my work, beneficiaries to whom the high quality service should be provided, willingness and need to learn about work and organization in other institutions.

... Participants in the Mobility program shared experiences and practices of their institutions and organizations from which they come. Also, visits to nursing homes, daily care centres, clubs for the elderly, creative workshops, shelters for the elderly in Serbia, Slovenia and Italy were very important and useful.

It is very important for me to apply the experience and practice in the Nursing Home where I work, with special emphasis on developing services in the community in the future and also the development of non-institutional care of the elderly.

Mobility programs strengthen the development capacity of the Adriatic region and demographic processes focused on social and health services of the elderly. The tendency is to support small systems and services in the local community in order to provide care for the elderly.

Biljana Raicevic, Nursing Home in Risan, Montenegro

I had knowledge of the NETAge project thanks to my friend Clara Clementi, volunteer for the association "Auser – Filo d'Argento" and now here I am to tell you my impressions.

In Slovenia I participated in my first mobility program as a volunteer and it was a good discovery, a new way to see and feel volunteering. I was affected looking at we volunteers and the social-health workers take on project aim: improving the coordination among public-private stakeholders, to deliver innovative social/health services to guarantee active, healthy and independently ageing, mainly through promoting home help for the wellbeing of elderly people. When this situation is not possible, the elderly often live in rest homes, where health staff try to keep a relation with the past life, through a family approach with photos, music, also furniture, that remind their youth: this is an important example of good practice.

I really liked the meeting center between generations in Kanal ob Soči: children, kids and elderly people spend some time together and exchange life's experiences, as in a sort of cooperative path. Immediately, I thought to "move" this idea in my native village Staffolo, a small municipality of 2500 citizens, where the 70% are over 50 years old: in some local meetings I presented this project and it was very successful.

Sharing ideas, situations, smiles and hugs was an enriching experience for me and I feel I came back with a lot of new "friends".

Ruth Farinelli, Auser Filo d'Argento, Jesi, Italia

Just while I'm writing these impressions of my mobility experience in Serbia, we're receiving very bad news about the ruinous flood that hit the Balkan countries. I think about special people I met there: the elderly, the social-health workers in the field of elderly assistance, in the elderly center and clubs in Sremska Mitrovica, Ruma and Novi Sad... I will remember this year, 2014, for the good experience I lived there, probably, they will remember it as the year of the great calamity...

I took part in the mobility program to Serbian region of Vojvodina, from 7 - 11 of April 2014. The experience allowed learning and thinking on ways in elderly care and assistance, but its merit was to allow entering in relationships in local, regional and international context.

Beyond the knowledge reached, there are a lot of emotions and personal relationships, which is an important resource for the future of NET-Age project.

We could learn about many positive situations, as, for example, the good organization of volunteering; many centers and clubs that offer socialization moments, health care, cultural activities; interesting projects as "elderly custody" in families. But they also exposed the occurring of some critical situations.

Learning and exchange of activities with other travel companions, allowed us to understand how it's important to promote "sustainable" ageing.

What I brought with me coming back from Belgrade? The need to develop and to keep, where it already exists, the networking among the different organizations interested in elderly care and assistance, promoting working in a systematic way and not in "emergency", cooperation public-private, and new synergies.

Moreover, I brought back the opportunity to think over our social/health services for ageing people in our country, reevaluating some of them, from the good neighborhood to mutual help: "ancient" ways of mutual relationships that contribute to keep elderly in their life context and "sustainable" in lack of economic resources.

Both the public and the private organizations could do something in this direction.

Finally, I brought back a project that it's not closed with the landing, but, really, it's all to build!

M. Sofia Rossetti, ATS X, Comune di Fabriano, Italia



NET-Age Local workshops

The weakness and challenges identified in the process of local mapping and analysis of stakeholders, policies and services in the field of elderly home care (WP3), as well as in the project preparation phase, were broken down into 4 knowledge exchange workshops in each area to facilitate more focused discussions.

Workshops were open to all stakeholders (public-private-end users) as detected by mapping (act. 3.1) to concretely put in practice actions for strengthening / creating local partnership to the social policies definition and to deliver innovative social health services to elderly.

Workshops are the key actions to reach Net-Age goals: creating local partnerships, opening the social policies definition process to key stakeholders through a bottom-up approach; creating the occasion of a positive sharing and collaboration framework for public-volunteering actors.

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NET-Age Local conference with policy makers

At the end of workshops round, in each area Public FBs in partnership with volunteering organize a top level conference with policy makers & decision makers competent in social-health services where proposals are merged from the 4 previous workshops and then presented. The aim of the conference is to analyse the critical aspects coming out during the mapping and workshops and to propose potential practical steps to the involved policy makers & decision makers. They could adopt such measures in order to overcome the lack of effectiveness in social-health services and the lack of collaboration between public-volunteer actors, to enhance knowledge and understanding of the different facets of independent living and elderly assistance, by stressing the key role of volunteering in this sector. It is also a great opportunity to inform the high political level about OMC and new strategies or innovative practices in the social-health services field as learned during the mobility and training sessions (WP4), to know the results of the Cross Border work, receiving inputs on the European strategies and on the solutions tested by the other involved partners. As for the outputs coming from the conference, FBs locally work on the White Paper draft, containing the conference results as well as lessons learned from implemented pilot action and from the exchange of experience with the other FBs.



NET-Age White paper - Local/regional recommendations for social service providers and policy makers

The White Paper is one of the main results of the Project. It is drafted in each region based on the partnership approach between the public and private sector. The document represents systematization and recommendations based on local exchange workshops with the purpose to outline the priorities in each region/country. It could be used for social planning and for transferring the best cross sector practice.

NET-Age Memorandum of Understanding

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Memorandum of Understanding is a multilateral agreement among the NET-Age partners signed at the end of the project in order to capitalize the achieved results and plan of future activities in Cross border region. It includes long term measures to foster socio-economic-political development of involved Regions in order to develop innovative social and health services for the elderly.



NET-Age Pilot actions

The diversity of the pilot actions shows that all partners planned their activities based on the national/regional priorities and white paper recommendations.

We could divide them in three specific topics:

1. Promotion of active aging, healthy lifestyles and mental health of the elderly and their rights through public campaigns, websites;
2. Development of volunteering activities in the field of elderly. Activities are oriented towards establishing and supporting of volunteer services through training and other support providers like volunteer centers/programs;
3. Development of innovative services for the elderly.

Pilot action in Italy

Eventually, the Pilot Action implemented by **Marche Region** and **CSV Marche** is mainly an opportunity to analyze and launch a process for settling and organizing partnerships between public institutions and volunteer associations, with a specific focus on the field of elderly care. Following this strategic plan, the partners from Marche Region started an experimental application of the OMC within the Pilot Action in order to improve social and health conditions of the elderly and provide support to caregivers. The Pilot Action of Marche Region is, indeed, an innovative scheme to:

- Test the OMC as a new approach for defining and planning social-health policies and for increasing and fostering the development of capacities and specific expertise both in public bodies and volunteer associations;
- Raise awareness and information about services provided to the elderly and their families.

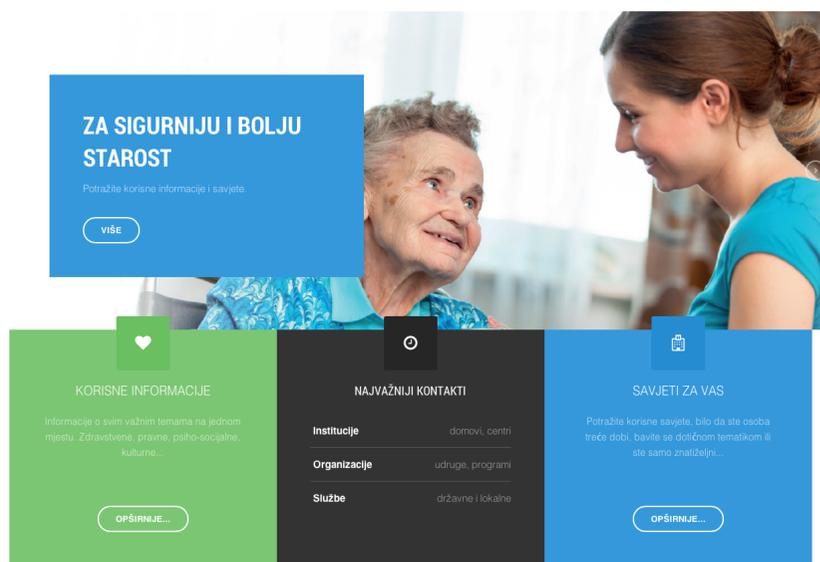
The implementation of the PA is divided in three steps:

1. Development and dissemination of a list including social-health services provided by the public bodies and volunteer associations;
2. Analysis of the Public Private Partnerships through the application of the OMC;
3. Drafting and dissemination of a report aimed at defining the organizational aspects of welfare systems.

Pilot action in Croatia

The pilot project defined by the **City of Split** and the **Association MI** has the main goal to enlarge information availability related to social services for the elderly by:

- Creating an interactive web platform with information about social services for the elderly in Split;
- Providing advices for family members who take care of elderly persons;
- Promoting active aging and healthy lifestyle;
- Improving capacities of non-profit social service providers to engage volunteers and manage the project cycle.



The web site www.seniori.hr has been designed and published. Partners in cooperation with the local stakeholder "Public institution for public health" have defined the concept and content. Available information has been collected and published. Experts in the area of psychology, social welfare, health and culture have been contracted for publishing of informative and/or educational articles. Brochure containing contacts of organizations and institutions in area of Split Dalmatia county and brief description of their core activities will be published as well. The elderly and their family members have been provided with information and referrals in direct contact as well.

A group of ten representatives of non-profit social service providers have been provided with two three-module trainings on project cycle management and volunteer management in order to increase their potentials to broaden services and enhance networking and cooperation. Promotional material - notebooks have been printed and the final promotional event will be conducted in order to motivate stakeholders for cooperation after the end of the pilot action as well as the NET-Age project.



Pilot action in Serbia

The Pilot Action implemented by **Novi Sad Humanitarian Centre (NSHC)** and **Provincial Department for Social Welfare** aims to promote cooperation between public institutions and civil society organizations / volunteers in the development of innovative services for the elderly.

The main goals of the Pilot Actions are:

- The capacity building of institutions for the elderly to organize and maintain volunteer programs;
- The introduction of innovative and user-friendly services for the elderly in Novi Sad.

The action plan contains seven components that are interconnected:

1. Development of volunteer-based programs for the elderly;
2. Promotion of volunteer work in institutions for elderly care;
3. Promotion of elderly people's mental health;
4. Promotion of elderly people's rights and provision of legal assistance;
5. Online activities: website maintenance, activities on social networks;
6. Introducing innovative services for elderly in institutions;
7. Capacity building to diversify service providers.

Pilot action in Montenegro

The design of the Pilot Action in Montenegro, implemented by the **Institute for Public Health of Montenegro** and **Association for Democratic Prosperity – Zid**, is based on a National level needs assessment analysis. All stakeholders complained for a lack of intergenerational centers and social services to support the elderly in active aging and social inclusion after the end of working life. The Pilot Action is developed by harmonizing some identified needs based on the goal of NET-Age project: the promotion of cooperation between public institutions and civil society organizations in development of innovative services for the elderly through promotion of intergeneration centers.

Objectives of the action are:

- To increase the capacity of civil society representatives in volunteering management and in providing assistance to the elderly;
- To promote an innovative voluntary service offer as well as intergeneration centers to the elderly in Montenegro.

The Pilot Action started in May 2014 and will be realized until April 2015. The activities are divided into different but interconnected segments:

1. Capacity building of volunteers
2. Promotion of intergeneration centers and promotion of active ageing:
 - NET-Age BUS
 - Info day's events for Innovative services promotion
 - Public invents
3. Online activities – Web portal



Pilot action in Slovenia

The Pilot Actions implemented in Slovenia were directed towards establishing the means, tools and opportunities for networking between private, public and volunteer institutions on behalf of, and for the benefits of the elderly of the Municipality of Kanal ob Soči. With its partner **Zveza društev upokojencev Slovenije** the **Municipality of Kanal ob Soči** made substantial effort to develop activities and outputs to increase access to information for the elderly and improve their quality of life.

Here follows the actions that were implemented:

- The implementation of a comprehensive analysis about the current status and the needs for help and assistance of the elderly (69+) who still leave at their homes in the Municipality of Kanal ob Soči (105 elderly included);
- The establishment of an informational phone number for the local population to call in case of needed assistance, guidance and help (on voluntary or paid basis);
- The issue of an informational brochure with listed social-health services, volunteer associations and public bodies who offer care and assistance to the elderly in the Goriška region (distributed in each household);
- The realization of trainings and workshops for the informal carers of the elderly to improve the quality of their lives and present methods of stress relieves to unburden the carers;
- The realization of trainings for prevention of mental ageing, maintaining good mental condition in later life and dealing with risk factors for dementia;
- The dissemination and awareness-raising activities on the benefits of inter-sectorial approach in networking for the benefits of the elderly.

Dissemination activities

In order to promote project activities, results and disseminate it in the region project partners have defined a Communication plan at the beginning of the project implementation.

Once the NET-Age brand was defined and promotional material (roll-up, posters, pen drives, flyer, letter head, web site, newsletter, and brochure) prepared and produced, each partner started with the dissemination activities in their region. Besides the standard communication with the local media, press conferences and press releases, each partner organized at least 4 capitalization events with the aim to present project results to the wider public.

As the project is being implemented in the Adriatic region, each partner has to participate or organize speaking opportunity on other conferences/events not directly related with the project, but related with the topic of social policies and services for the elderly.

As an additional dissemination tool, the project website was defined as one of the main tools for external communication and presentation of the project activities and results. It has a dynamic and a static part and besides the project information, project partners and activities, it has likewise a component with the documents related to the topic from other projects. It is used as a sharing platform for the partners, as well as for other stakeholders in the area of social service.





