



ACTIVE – Active Citizenship Training Initiative for Volunteers in Europe

Venice 9th – 13th December 2008

Day by day programme

	Tuesday December 9th	Wednesday 10th December	Thursday December 11th	Friday December 12th	Saturday December 13th
Morning Session 9.30–12.30	Session 1 Davide Di Pietro - Lunaria	Session 3 Davide Di Pietro – Lunaria	Session 5 Laura Casorio FCEI	Session 7 Carmen Stadelhofer University of Ulm	Session 9 A Rabuiti Municip.Ferrara H. Czertok Teatro Nucleo
	General Introduction to senior volunteers exchanges	Preparation of the volunteers	Senior volunteers Long-term service (6 to 12 months)	Dialogue between young and old	Local governments and networking
Lunch					
Afternoon Session 14.30-17.30	Session 2 Aleksander Kurushev Estyes	Session 4 Paolo Maddoni - Legambiente	Session 6 Carmen Stadelhofer University of Ulm	Session 8 DG EAC - Italian National Agency LLP	Session 10 Lunaria Youth Information center
	Preparation of hosting organizations:	Senior volunteers and intercultural learning	Use of internet in voluntary work abroad	Funding opportunities	Visit to a local project

Introduction

Lunaria and the SEVEN network are proud to introduce the training course aimed at staff and volunteers of adult learning institutions, voluntary service organizations and local governments dealing with social issues who are curious to learn how setting up and managing transnational senior volunteers exchanges throughout Europe. This course is based on the daily practical experience of the organizations belonging to the SEVEN network (Senior European Volunteers Exchange Network) and all the trainers belong to it. Both the Network and the training course are supported by the European Commission - Grundtvig program on adult learning.

Please find below an introduction to each session.

SESSION 1 General introduction to senior volunteers exchanges (Davide Di Pietro – Lunaria)

Since the year 2001, several pilot projects of senior volunteers exchanges have been carried out. More than 400 senior volunteers (i. e. 50 years old +) took part in a project abroad lasting from two weeks to two months, volunteering in favour of community based projects in the social, cultural and environmental field. Can we consider volunteering abroad, including its preparatory and follow-up stages, as a full informal education experience?.

How can we promote educational paths featuring intercultural learning, personal skills development and active citizenship in a perspective of social cohesion among different cultures and different age groups?

We will explore how the intercultural learning process works on two ways: not only the volunteer is deepened into another culture, but also the host learns from the volunteers different points of view, different ways to perform activities and directly deal with another mentality beyond all prejudices and stereotypes.

SESSION 2: Preparation of hosting organisations (Aleksander Kurushev – Estyes)

As we expect, in autumn 2008 a new programme - Grundtvig Initiative for Volunteers in Europe – aimed at senior citizens will be launched by the European Commission. This Programme will give an opportunity to our organisations to exchange a number of senior volunteers on the service projects abroad lasting 3 to 8 weeks. Already witnessing vivid interest of potential senior volunteers to such type of exchange programmes during pilot projects of the past (Mobility 55, Still Active, Teaming Up) we believe that the demand will be high again. Will we be able to respond it offering good number of interesting placements and ensuring the quality of those?

Having decided to participate in the Programme offering placements for senior volunteers every organisation will immediately face a number of quite natural questions. What to consider when planning an exchange? What are the main framework conditions (accommodation, meals, leisure time) on such exchanges? What type of work can be offered and how it should be organised? How to prepare local communities for hosting international senior volunteers? What are DOs and DON'Ts in the exchange?

During this session - Preparation of Hosting Organisations - we are going to try to find answer to these and many other important questions and get encouragement to organise host projects for senior volunteers in our countries. But there is no magic guidebook, nor a universal recipe or general theory how to do it. The basis for our discussion will be diverse previous experience of similar projects, we actually have already collected – through participation to the above mentioned pilot projects, Learning Partnership projects or hosting senior volunteers in our voluntary workcamps. So this workshop will be very much done by the participants themselves sharing their knowledge and experience, presenting examples, study cases, etc. Still we believe that the conclusions and drawn recommendations of this workshop will be absolutely helpful to the organisations who indeed wants to host senior volunteers in their countries.

SESSION 3: Preparation of the Volunteers (Davide Di Pietro – Lunaria)

We have said many times that we aim at offering an educational package, rather than a nice period spent abroad in volunteering. This proposal includes a pre-departure training part that may be spent volunteering for a local project and/or in a training meeting. We will share our experience so far in this field and we will also try to test some *methodologies* when training the volunteers and the staff or volunteers of the hosting organisations. Another important part in the preparation of the volunteers is the information package that they receive before the project: what information should be sent to the volunteer previously: and what information should the volunteer give to his/her host? Should there be a sort of written Agreement between the volunteer and the organisation? And finally, we will tackle the language issue, that is the factor that prevent many volunteers to take part to a project abroad: how can we deal with this? What solutions can be envisaged? Would it be a session with more questions than answers?...maybe not.

SESSION 4: Senior volunteers and intercultural learning (Paolo Maddonni – Legambiente)

Facing the differences, reducing distances, discovering similarities

“We want to create a new kind of army, an army for peace, composed by men and women who move from their comfortable home for going to live an experience of solidarity and voluntary action. Volunteers from different countries and regions who look mainly to what they have in common instead to what divide them”.

So used to say Pierre Cérésolle, founder of the peace and voluntary service movement of the Service Civil International in 1921. Still today, the main purpose of the international voluntary service is to provide the chance to people, with all possible personal and social background, to meet, to exchange, to break prejudices, to discover other ways to solve conflicts, to contribute to a new common culture of peace.

Senior volunteers or travellers have a longer history of personal life, rich in experiences they had directly or through their parents, children, relatives and friends. Once senior people are outside their everyday life, being in another region of their home country or even abroad for an exchange, a voluntary workcamp or a project, their luggage of experiences can be open and exchanged with other people. It's not an easy task. Sometimes they are jealous of their luggage, or too proud for discuss it, or not ready to include some new items in it.

How senior Europeans can identify the right approach for the meeting/crashing with another culture and with the prejudices and stereotypes that their own cultures carry with them? How to deal with different food, habits, religion, language, origin, social background?

SESSION 5: Senior volunteers - long-term service, 6 to 12 months (Laura Casorio – Federazione Chiese Evangeliche in Italia)

This workshop is about long term opportunities for senior volunteers: experiences, challenges, evaluations. Accompanying measures for volunteers and hosting organisation, language, local community, inter-generational experience, how to set up a program. We want to discuss a particular possibility that is volunteering for 6 to 12 months in another country. This might have different features from short term volunteering and we are going to explore this field as well. We will report about past pilot experiences exploring placement and volunteer's motivation, how to make contacts, the selection process and the preparation (logistic/intercultural).

We will also have a look at funding possibilities for such an activity that might take the form of partnership between local hosting and local sending community (multiple partnerships), together with an accompanying program: mentorship, intergenerational relations, integration within the local community, tasks identification.

SESSION 6: Use of the Internet in voluntary work abroad (Carmen Stadelhofer – ZAWIW University of Ulm)

Internet offers a wide range of information and communication possibilities. It is helpful for seniors who work voluntarily abroad. Before they start their experience, they may inform themselves about the host organisation and the host country. They may previously get in contact with them by email. During their work abroad seniors may also stay in contact with their partners, families and friends. But also if questions or problems appear, Internet may be helpful to solve them. The relations to the host can be hold up also after the visit by communication tools offered by the new media. They offer also the ability to exchange with other volunteers, e.g. by discussion forums. Or to release exchanges' results on a website. This workshop will introduce to the advantages of the use of the Internet for senior volunteers.

SESSION 7: Dialogue between Young and Old (Carmen Stadelhofer – ZAWIW University of Ulm)

Social developments (demographical developments, change of the image of families, educational standards, ...) necessitate a reciprocal intergenerational support. Experiences from other projects show that the old and the young people can learn and benefit a lot from each other also beyond familial structures. Voluntarily, working seniors pass their life experiences and competences to the younger generation and support them in the acquisition of knowledge and in the planning of their lives. In this workshop good practice of intergenerational projects shall be presented by Carmen Stadelhofer. It shall be discussed how these experiences can be transferred to the future projects and which premises are necessary for an effective dialogue between Young and Old.

SESSION 8: Funding opportunities
(European Commission DG EAC, Italian national Agency of LLP)

As already said, the European Commission is likely to launch an exchange program for senior volunteers in the next months. We will have guests from DG Education and Culture who will introduce us to this program and will answer the many questions that we likely are going to have. As the programme will be managed at national level by the National agencies of the Lifelong learning program, we will have a representative of the Italian national agency that could introduce us to the technical procedures to submit an application in our own countries. There will be also time for the participants to share other funding opportunities.

SESSION 9: Local Governments and networking
(Augusta Rabuiti - Municipality of Ferrara and Horacio Czertok, Teatro Nucleo in Ferrara).

The support of senior volunteers exchanges, as well as any other activity relating to active ageing, adult learning and active citizenship should not be sought only at European level. Local governments also should have a part in implementing these initiatives as they happen exactly in the areas they are called to administer. In this session we will explore on how local governments can implement senior volunteers exchange through a networking action at local level. We will look at good practices in building up social Networks and the ways of co-operation among the different actors. The session will have a problem solving orientation and will be carried out through examples, study cases and testimonials.

SESSION 10 Visit to a local project
(Lunaria – Youth information office in Venice)

We are checking several possibilities in the area that has a very high rate of senior citizens and where the non profit sector is really strong thanks to policies at local level favouring the process of active ageing and citizenship. This part will be organised in co-operation with Lunaria information center for youth that we manage in Venice. So we will likely visit some cross-generation project. We will give more details about this session by the end of October.