

## LIVING AND LEARNING TOGETHER WITHIN EUROPE

Gemeinsam leben und lernen in Europa (Living and learning within Europe, short GLL) offers a free training course for older volunteers interested in volunteering. In the theoretical part of the training the participants learn practical/hands on information about running volunteer projects and getting a better idea about their future role as a volunteer. Apart from theoretical training and a joint project the program included also personal coaching of all participants for a year. Each participant goes through orientation depending on which field of volunteering they want to be engaged in and what role they want to play. By participating in the training course the participants improve and professionalise their volunteer work. The project also helps to improve the quality, attractiveness and accessibility of learning opportunities for elder volunteers. What GLL is very proud of is the fact that one third of the participants have a migrant background. This experience led to the idea that volunteering offers a lot of chances to learn to get free training and to gain new skills and know-how.



In Germany, many NGOs have complex and intensive training programs for volunteers. So GLL invited volunteer organisations CSV (from United Kingdom), HESTIA (from Czech Republic), CNVC (from Romania), CSV Napoli (from Italy) to form a Grundtvig learning partnership and discuss the topic of volunteering, exchange experiences, identify good practices for training programs for volunteers and measures of recognition of the gained learning experiences and skills and know-how through volunteering. The main aim of this partnership is to identify transferable best practices used in the member countries and organisations which address effectively the promotion of learning opportunities through volunteering and the barriers to volunteering. The partners research, analyse and compare related materials and activities on their regional and national level and share their know-how. Their exchange of good practices focus on the following issues: contribution of volunteering to peoples' learning and skills development, creating strategies to encourage citizens to realize the learning opportunities through volunteer work, using volunteering programs to develop personal, social and professional skills and reflection on them, rewarding and recognising volunteering activities, using volunteering as a catalyst for citizens to engage more effectively with other learning (or in some cases re-engaging with formal learning or training qualifications) and improving training and learning programmes within volunteer organizations.

The partnership's exchanges also focus on identifying different types of learning that occur in volunteer settings (e. g. instrumental, social-expressive or experimental learning, training in skills needed for specific tasks, group socialisation and collaborative activities, problem solving, teamwork), comparing formal education, training, informal, and incidental learning in volunteer settings, promoting successful content, methods and programs of learning and training in volunteer settings (e. g. workshops, seminars, mentorship, apprenticeship, training manuals, and other methods), discussing professionalisation and standards for entry and practice in the volunteer sector and recognition for the knowledge, skills and attitudes gained and developed through volunteering and creating of conditions for greater participation

in volunteering for various target groups (e.g. youth, migrants, disadvantaged, elder, disabled).

Both volunteers and volunteer organisation staff are involved in this learning partnership. In face-to face meetings participants share their know-how, experiences and good practices, discuss them (for example using the world café method) and continue the discussion and further develop the joint workshops, curricula, exchange their thoughts and experiences, etc. Partners and volunteers who are involved in several different ways learn a lot about the vast variety of learning opportunities through volunteering.

Visits to workshops with partners facilitate learning best practices in volunteer recruitment, retention and management. Each organisation provides new points of views on the concept of volunteering because of their different historical and cultural contexts, their different scopes, settings and target groups. The partners also benefit from the development and promotion of new education material, knowledge and the better use of existing facilities. Being an active partner in a transnational working group improves the motivation, personal skills and confidence of the participants. The partnership also enhances the understanding of local contexts through the mutual dialogue and raises awareness on the European learning environment. Due to the recommendation of the British partner CFV, the project coordinator Perdita Wingerter was appointed a volunteer delegate for the conference "Volunteer! Make a difference" in Brussels organized by the EU commission where about 200 volunteers from all around Europe had the opportunity to exchange know-how and expertise. Through this experience the partnership's network of contacts in volunteer organisations all around Europe has grown even further.

## COORDINATOR

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## PARTNERS

- ★ CSV/Volonteuropé, United Kingdom
- ★ SAM, United Kingdom
- ★ HESTIA, Czech Republic
- ★ CSV Napoli, Italy
- ★ CNVC, Romania

