

Methodological material for adult educators
practical training

Digital inclusion of vulnerable people
through volunteering activities

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Acknowledgment

This good practice examples book was carried out within the ERASMUS+ Cooperation partnerships in adult education, © 2023 - 2024 "Vulnerable people digital inclusion through digital volunteering" Project nr.2022-2-PL01-KA210-ADU-000092441



Co-funded by
the European Union

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2024

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Introduction

Elderly people and migrants' cooperation through volunteering activities can bring together to identify the opportunities for digital volunteering and its preferred possible forms and types as well as existing practices in partner countries. In this methodological material we provide the technical and methodological background for digital volunteering of elderly people, to promote services they can provide; give examples of possible digital volunteering opportunities for the elderly; introduce the elderly to digital volunteering, and initiation digital learning ways for seniors; contribute to the support to elderly in non-formal learning activities and improvement of their mental health and wellbeing; promoting social inclusion and reducing loneliness; set a precedent for digital inclusion through volunteering.

Trainings focus on helping to understand differences between the terms of digital platform and digital tools; and increase self-awareness about digital skills and competencies. During the trainings should be organized user-friendly and practice-oriented discussion, learning experience, presented online tools to support adult educators in their daily work, also motivated and encouraged willingness to use innovative teaching tools and materials.

The training aims to:

- strengthen digital volunteering competencies
- build relations between two generations
- created activities will give direct benefit with gained "soft" skills
- introduce and learn how to create learning situations digitally for vulnerable groups
- improve, renew, or gain competencies in how to work with vulnerable people through a digital volunteering approach
- gain international management skills
- gained knowledge about digital volunteering, and digital inclusion.

Needs analyze

2023 October-November has conducted a small scale survey to analyze in Poland and the Netherlands volunteering experience and preferences. In both countries participated 24 participants. The purpose of this survey was to gather insights into the motivations, preferences, and potential barriers faced by elderly individuals when it comes to volunteering. A total of 24 participants took part in the survey, contributing valuable information that will aid in the development of targeted volunteering opportunities for the elderly demographic.

Information was collected individually and focus group survey was implemented. Creating a survey about elderly people volunteering involves crafting questions that will provide valuable insights into their motivations, preferences, and potential barriers to volunteering. The majority of participants were 60-69 years old.

In the survey, 95% participated female participants. Only 3 participants didn't have volunteering experience, others respondents currently are engaged in volunteer activities, showcasing a notable interest in contributing to the community. Among the volunteers, the most common types of activities included gardening within community, helping migrants, highlighting a diverse range of interests and skills.

The primary motivations reported by participants included a strong desire to contribute to the community (100%), staying active and engaged (100 %), and socializing/making new connections (60%).

The importance of aligning volunteer work with personal interests or skills was emphasized, with 100% rating it as very important. When asked about the types of volunteer activities they would be most interested in, respondents expressed a wide range of preferences, including mentoring, community events, organizing cultural activities and teaching.

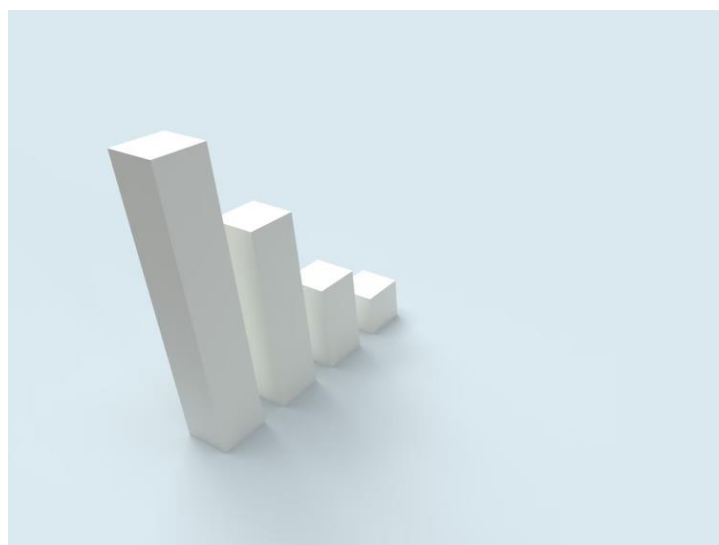


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Approximately 80% of participants reported facing barriers or challenges in digital volunteering, for them this concept and idea was new. Common challenges included lack of IT skills, health barriers, geographical barriers, mobility restrictions.

Preferences for the time of day to volunteer varied, with 30% favoring mornings, 50% afternoons, 10% evenings, and 10% expressing flexibility.

Frequency preferences indicated a desire for flexibility, with participants choosing daily, weekly, monthly, or occasional volunteering based on personal availability.

The survey provided valuable insights into the motivations, preferences, and challenges faced by elderly individuals in the context of volunteering. This information was served as a foundation for developing targeted programs that align with the interests and needs of the elderly population in our community.

How to connect two vulnerable groups?

In the project framework, we have tried such model - elderly people helped migrants to learn the language during weekly meetings. During personal meetings this was introduced to country culture and traditions. Elderly people during a weekly meeting read fairytales for migrant children. Also, elderly people supported and encouraged migrants, migrant women especially to be involved in community activities, suggested to be involved in volunteering too and connect with community network. During this project activity some migrants found "second" family member from host country (mentor and supporter). During training elderly and migrants, adult educators gained digital skills. Also was collected and provide recommendation for adult educators how to work with vulnerable groups.

We accepted the need regularly to educate both adult educators and adult learners as technologies are changing rapidly, we have used a participatory approach, that involves both adult educators and adult learners in the process, offer digital literacy courses for vulnerable people (they need more attention, individual approach, not fast explanation and patient from lecture), technical assistance via telephone and time-flexible. We have used an action-oriented approach – learning by doing, used direct project-based and problem-based activities. In order to motivate both adult educators and adult learners to acquire better digital skills, digital volunteering, we have organize a short courses that directly relate to their daily life.



The competencies that are necessary today to use digital technologies in a confident, critical, collaborative, and creative way for carrying out activities and achieving goals related to work, learning, leisure, inclusion, and participation in our digital society.

Present real-world problems that require critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Encourage learners to explore solutions collaboratively.

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Organizing training activities we focused on 4 topics:

1. Digital volunteering skills
2. Teamwork and physical activities, to prepare for volunteering activities
3. Civil competences development with vulnerable people
4. Focused on examples of how to work with vulnerable groups organize art activities and develop language skills at the same time

As two vulnerable populations, migrant women and the elderly can be connected to generate meaningful chances for understanding, community development, and mutual support.

Main activities through which connection could be found:

Connection of vulnerable groups through programs for Language Exchange

Set up sessions where migrant women teach their mother tongue or cultural customs in exchange for assistance from older people in using the local language. Benefits: Migrant women acquire language skills and cultural understanding, while elderly participants feel appreciated as mentors.

Connection of vulnerable groups through Workshops on Digital Literacy

In small groups, migrant women and elderly people are paired to learn digital skills, with an emphasis on useful applications like online banking, social media, and video calling. Benefits: Promotes cooperation and fosters a feeling of collective achievement.

Cultural, sport, art Exchange Events,

Organize cooking, sport classes, art projects, or music sessions where participants showcase their cultural heritage.

Benefits: Builds camaraderie through shared creativity and mutual appreciation of diversity.

Community Gardening as possible connection place

Develop a shared garden project where both groups work together to grow flowers, vegetables, or herbs.

Benefits: Encourages collaboration, provides physical activity, and creates a tangible outcome they can be proud of.

Non-formal learning activities for inclusion

Link migrant women looking for ways to give back to the community, like friendship, light caregiving, or language support, with older people who need company.

Benefits: Meets needs for both parties and creates close, personal ties.

Communication tools through active community women

Establish online forums, active women group through WhatsApp groups where older people and migratory women can exchange information, pose queries, and arrange meetings.

Benefits: Promotes digital inclusivity and offers ongoing interaction.

How to be involved in common cooperation?

Encouraging senior citizens and migrants to volunteer together can be a fulfilling project that promotes mutual support, cultural exchange, and community involvement. Adult educator should make a detailed assessment of the needs and preferences of the local migrants and senior populations. Determine any areas in which their interests and skill sets might be similar. Provide venues or activities that unite the two groups so they can communicate and get to know one another better. To start relationships, throw community activities, workshops, or cultural exchanges. Examine the abilities, resources, and skills of each group.

Examine the ways in which migrants can provide a variety of viewpoints, languages, and cultural views, and how the elderly can lend their knowledge, expertise, and experience. Provide volunteer opportunities that complement both groups' interests and skill sets. For instance, cooperative community projects, cultural seminars, and language exchange programs.

To guarantee that senior volunteers and migrants alike are aware of each other's backgrounds and viewpoints, conduct training and orientation programs. Foster a friendly and inclusive environment. Create initiatives that promote cross-cultural and intergenerational dialogue.

This could entail storytelling sessions, cooking classes, painting workshops, or cooperative



gardening projects. Work together with neighborhood hubs or centers to provide a local point for group activities. Adult educators should make sure both groups can easily access, feel welcome, and have room in these areas. Make use of a variety of communication platforms to

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connect with migratory and elderly communities. Use social media, neighborhood bulletin boards, and local media to distribute the word.

Join forces with neighborhood groups that provide assistance to migrants or the elderly. To increase the effectiveness of your efforts, enlist their help and resources. Evaluate the results of your programs on a regular basis. Get input from both groups so that the required changes and advancements can be made. Honor and recognize the efforts made by migrant and elderly volunteers. Organize thank-you parties to acknowledge their contributions and foster a feeling of community pride. Make sure that every volunteer work complies with ethical and legal requirements. Provide explicit rules and communication to address any potential sensitivities related to culture or generation.

You may establish a cooperative volunteering atmosphere that encourages understanding, and community cohesiveness amongst senior citizens and migrants by cultivating a feeling of shared purpose and mutual gain.

How to create a learning environment and situations?

Establishing an effective learning environment entails taking into account various aspects, spanning the physical, social, and psychological dimensions.

Physical Environment: Making the area cozy and well-organized is a priority while setting up the physical environment. This entails making sure the classroom is spotless, organized, and well-lit. It's crucial to give students enough workspace and comfy chairs. A favorable learning environment is also enhanced by easily accessible learning resources and materials. Incorporating technological tools like projectors and computers is essential to improving the entire educational experience. Different learning styles are accommodated by designing a flexible environment that can be modified for a range of learning activities and taking into account a variety of seating arrangements.

Social Environment: It's critical to create a welcoming and upbeat environment. Learners should be taught to cooperate and work as a team, and they should feel comfortable expressing



themselves. Facilitating unambiguous channels of communication between educators and learners fosters productive engagement. Promoting communication

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and attentive listening improves the educational process as a whole. Group projects and conversations, for example, foster a sense of community inside the classroom and foster a cooperative and encouraging social atmosphere.

Psychological Environment: Preserving engagement requires an understanding of learners' motives. Motivation is increased when the learning process includes real-world examples and useful applications. Giving learners difficult assignments that push them but don't overwhelm them promotes development. Fostering a growth mindset—which highlights the importance of perseverance and effort—also contributes to the development of a positive psychological environment. Learners' confidence and drive are increased when they receive regular, constructive criticism and are acknowledged for their accomplishments.

Interactive Learning: Adding interactive exercises to the curriculum, such as debates, discussions, and practical projects, encourages student participation and a deeper comprehension of the subject matter. A dynamic and inclusive learning environment is ensured by the use of technology and multimedia that is catered to various learning styles.

All things considered, a well-rounded learning environment gives priority to the social and psychological elements that are essential to creating a welcoming, interesting, and productive learning environment for each and every participant, in addition to the physical space and resources.

Make use of a variety of assessment techniques, such as projects, quizzes, and presentations, to make sure that they are in line with the stated learning objectives. Make learning materials more relevant by connecting them to real-world scenarios. Enhance the educational process by planning field trips or inviting knowledgeable guests to share their ideas. Continue to be flexible and sensitive to the changing needs of your pupils, modifying the classroom as needed in response to assessments and comments.

It is imperative to acknowledge that the secret is to provide a setting that prioritizes lifelong learning, encourages participation, and accommodates different learning preferences. Continually enhance your approach by evaluating it on a regular basis and taking learners' feedback and advancement into account.

These suggestions are designed to provide a comprehensive learning experience for elderly individuals and migrants, fostering collaboration and understanding through volunteerism.

Small scale training testing with the target group



Practical training in Poland and The Netherlands was organized in 2024 April and 2025 January period.

Participated 82 people.

Different training was organized to include adult educators and vulnerable groups from local/regional adult educators institutions - other stakeholders working with adults.

Most were involved in vulnerable groups (elderly people and migrant women). They had a chance to strengthen digital volunteering competencies, build relations between two generations, create activities that gave direct benefit with gained "soft" skills.

Adult educators were introduced and learned how to create learning situations, how to start volunteering digitally for vulnerable groups, improved, renewed, or gained competencies in how to work with vulnerable people through digital volunteering approach.

Different adult educators gained international management skills, improved, gained, or renewed competencies working with vulnerable groups, gained knowledge about digital volunteering, digital inclusion.

In total we have organized 4 physical meetings with target group and reach 43 from Poland and 39 people from the Netherlands.

We organized 4 training sessions focusing on digital literacy development, teamwork and physical activities, civil competences development, focused on examples of how to work with vulnerable groups organize art activities and develop language skills at the same time.

Conclusion:

By encouraging cross-cultural awareness and deep connections, the training program seeks to enable elderly adults and migrants to actively participate in community service. Collaborative exercises that emphasize the importance of variety and a common goal were undertaken by the participants.

By the end of the program, participants gained the confidence and practical understanding necessary to make a substantial contribution to volunteer endeavors. By strengthening ties throughout the community, these donations will foster a more welcoming and cohesive atmosphere where everyone feels appreciated and supported and possible to use digital volunteering when it is comfortable.

Annex 1:

Title: Survey on volunteering

Introduction:

Thank you for participating in survey about volunteering. Your input is valuable in understanding the motivations and engaging in volunteer activities. Please answer the following questions thoughtfully. These questions are guidance to implement focus group.

Demographic Information:

Age:

18-30

40-60

60-69

70-79

80-89

90+

Gender:

Male

Female

Other (please specify)

Do you currently engage in any volunteer activities?

Yes

No

If yes, please briefly describe the type of volunteer work you are involved in.

Motivations for Volunteering:

What motivates you to volunteer? (Select all that apply)

Contributing to the community

Staying active and engaged

Socializing and making new connections

Using skills and knowledge

Feeling a sense of purpose

Other (please specify)

On a scale of 1 to 5, how important is it for you that the volunteer work aligns with your personal interests or skills?

1 (Not important at all)

2

3

4

5 (Very important)

What type of volunteer activities would you be most interested in? (e.g., mentoring, community events, fundraising, teaching, etc.)

Barriers to Volunteering:

Have you faced any barriers or challenges in volunteering?

Yes

No

If yes, please briefly describe the barriers you have encountered.

On a scale of 1 to 5, how important is it for you that the volunteering opportunities are easily accessible in terms of location and transportation?

1 (Not important at all)

2

3

4

5 (Very important)

Preferences:

What time of day would you prefer to volunteer?

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

Flexible

How frequently would you like to volunteer?

Daily

Weekly

Monthly

Occasionally

Closing:

Is there anything else you would like to share about your thoughts on elderly volunteering?

Would you be interested in receiving information about new volunteer opportunities tailored for elderly individuals?

Yes

No

Thank you for completing our survey! Your insights are valuable in shaping future volunteering opportunities for elderly individuals.



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