

**Background and the general and specific objectives of the Project.**

As populations age it is becoming ever more important to ensure that all older people have the opportunity to live full and active lives and remain important members of our communities.  As we age the risk of social isolation increases and it is well documented how this can bring about, depression, ill health and dependency.  There is evidence that shows how involvement in learning activities have a positive impact on later life and can reduce isolation, keep the body active and stimulate the mind promoting a greater involvement in community life.

  This project offers older people aged 50+ the opportunity to take part in volunteering activities that will bring about benefits for them individually and their communities. They will volunteer with local senior groups in planning, organising and facilitating activities that promote positive ageing and encourage participation in learning activities.

  The aims of the project are to promote social inclusion by highlighting the positive contribution older people can make and encourage individuals to engage in social, educational and cultural activities.  More specifically volunteers will have the opportunity to gain skills in creative writing and storytelling, new technologies and languages as well as skills in planning, organ

ising and facilitating group activities.

  We envisage that the acquired skills can be utilised by the volunteers in their own settings thus   contributing to a self help learning culture, where older people themselves take control an

d responsibility for organising and promoting learning activities within their own groups.

  Another objective of the project is to highlight the benefits of volunteering both for individuals and their communities and to encourage older people in both regions to consider volunteering.  We hope the participants involved in the project will highlight and pass on the positive experience of volunteering and be first hand examples of how active involvement can contribute to a better quality of life.

  The project will have the added dimension of the opportunity for volunteers to develop a greater intercultural awareness and increase the transnational mobility of older people within Europe.  Volunteers will have a deeper insight into the host co

untries and improved language skills.  As people age they have to adapt to many changes and the exchange of volunteers will also give participants the opportunity to develop the capacity to adapt to new environments thus giving them opportunities to deal with change in a positive and formative way.

  The volunteers will work jointly on producing a book of short stories and poetry in both languages.  They will also produce digital stories about their experiences on the Grundtvig Senior Volunteering Project.