

Seniors as Guides to Local Community Life

1. Project Relevance

The Senior-Guides project intended to develop, implement and disseminate a curriculum for the training of older volunteers to conduct guided tours for senior citizens and inform them about the specific offers for them available in their locality (e.g. lifelong learning opportunities, volunteering possibilities and social services provision).

By developing certain key skills, senior-guides acted not only as end beneficiaries, but also as cascaders for older people.

The project is generally addressing the following target groups

- older people, who are interested in participating in the training and providing senior-guide tours;
- older people, who are interested in participating in tours;
- organisations, which intend to act as hosts of guided tours.

It is a project based on the empowerment and involvement of seniors. The project results are available on the website. The Training Support Pack, which includes the experiences gained and the training materials developed within the project, could also be a valuable resource and used as a model (it can be downloaded: http://www.senior-guides.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=23&Itemid=12).

2. Background and Aims

In each partner country (AT, DE, IT, LT, CH, UK), training providers, seniors' organisations and/or public authorities formed a partnership. Furthermore, Regional Networking Platforms were established in order to involve service providers, representatives of the beneficiaries' group, seniors & migrant organizations and policy makers in the whole process.

In each partner country, local partners were training seniors to become Senior Guides. As per project description "Senior-guides are a source of information, guidance and advice about services, facilities and support available to senior citizens in their own town/region. They are preferably driven by their own interests that they would like to convey to others (e.g. sports, cultural life, and local history).

These interests are the main focus in the training and lead participants in shaping their own special profile as a 'guide'."

3. Description of the Target Groups

The target groups of this project were:

- △ older people, who are interested in participating in the training and providing senior-guide tours;
- △ older people, who are interested in participating in tours;
- △ organizations that want to act as hosts of guided tours.

The project partners organized trainings for senior guides, the groups had between 8 and 20 participants.

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Project number: 502875-LLP-1-2009-1-AT-GRUNDTVIG-GMP
Coordinating organisation: queraum. cultural and social research (AT)
Countries involved: Austria, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Switzerland, United Kingdom
Types of organisations involved: training providers, seniors organizations, public authorities
Implementation level: European and regional levels
Website: <http://www.senior-guides.eu>

4. Outputs and Multiplying Outcomes

The key result of the Senior-Guides project is the **Training Support Pack**, which includes all the experiences gained and training materials developed within the two-year project: It is available in all the partners' languages, and it includes:

The Senior-Guides Curriculum: The Curriculum defines the target group of the Senior-Guides training, gives an overview on modules and explains important steps before and after the training. In addition, some examples of activities were included; trainers could use such examples within the relevant modules.

Job Aids: In addition to the training activities described in the Curriculum, the trainers involved in the Senior-Guides project collected relevant material and practical support (e.g. PowerPoint presentations, handouts or descriptions of activities) as a resource for the adult trainers who are going to deliver Senior-Guides trainings.

Case Studies: Case Studies from all partner countries give an insight on how the Senior-Guides training was implemented and which kind of guided tours and initiatives were developed by our Senior-Guides in Austria, Germany, Italy, Lithuania and the United Kingdom.

Golden Rules: Based on their practical experience, Senior-Guides trainers summarized useful tips as orientation for other trainers.

The Training Support Pack can be downloaded from the project's website.

5. Impact and Sustainability

The Senior-Guides Training Course is based on empowerment and participation. Therefore, it strongly involves the group of learners, inspiring them to contribute with their potential and experiences. As for sustainability, upon the participants' selection, those were preferred who could see themselves carrying out tour projects with interested organisations even after the end of the project. (Curriculum: 9) Further, the presentation of the Training Support Packs to relevant stakeholders, institutions and communities can be an appropriate way to inspire other institutions to train Senior-Guides.

6. Educational Process

In each of the partner countries, 10 to 15 volunteers participated in the training course which was divided into four modules and stretched over five to six months. Trainers were qualified educators in adult education and especially trained in the objectives of the Senior-Guide project. The training itself is learner-oriented and partly self-organized (4 classroom modules and 3 self-organized study circles go hand in hand). The course participants are the main resource with which trainers will work. One of the most important issues of the training was, therefore, empowering the group of learners to form their own self-organized "study circles", where participants with similar interests and ideas for a senior-guide profile were working together to realize their "project". The groups themselves were offered coaching by one of the trainers, and they cooperated with the service providers (host organizations). (Curriculum: 6) Regional networking platforms including service providers, senior guides, seniors and migrant organizations and policy makers supported the work process. (Project Flyer: 1)

After the training and testing the tour projects of all teams in reality, the last phase of the project included the training evaluation by trainers and learners, and a final event where project results were presented to the public. Stakeholders, politicians and important partners from the community, as well as networking organizations were also invited. It can be a signal for follow-ups and implementation of the tours. This event also provided senior-guides with a chance to present their tour projects. Last but not least, it was a good opportunity to honour the course participants. (Curriculum: 42)

The Training Support Pack - the key result of the Senior-Guides project that includes the experiences gained and training materials developed- will be presented in each partner country to institutions, communities and stakeholders. It includes the "Curriculum" for the training of older people to become senior-guides (overview on modules, and it explains important steps before and after the training), "Job Aids" (relevant material and practical support for trainers), "Case Studies" from all partner countries, and the "Golden Rules" summarized by experienced Senior-Guides trainers. (Senior Guides Homepage)