



# Active Senior Citizens: volunteers for social inclusion

*Grundtvig Senior Volunteering Project realized under  
the Lifelong Learning Programme, founded by the  
European Commission*

*Palermo ► Sfântu Gheorghe*  
*Sfântu Gheorghe ► Palermo*

*01 August 2013 - 31 July 2015*



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



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# Active Senior Citizens: volunteers for social inclusion



**It is a Grundtvig Senior Volunteering Project realized under the Lifelong Learning Programme, founded by the European Commission.**

*It started in 01 August 2013 and finished on 31 July 2015.*

“Active Senior Citizens: volunteers for social inclusion” is a social project whose main aim is to promote the active participation of senior volunteers in the realization of social inclusion, giving an European dimension to the local work of the organizations involved thanks to the cultural and experiential contribution of volunteers from another European Country, while increasing senior volunteers’ personal, social, practical and intercultural skills and making them aware of their role as European active citizens.

It was reached through the exchange of senior volunteers (people over 50 years old) between the Italian Associazione Uniamoci Onlus (5 volunteers) and the Romanian organization Fundația Creștină Diakonia Sfântu Gheorghe (6 volunteers). Both the organizations are actively involved in the promotion of social inclusion of young adult people with disabilities. The main focus of the project was the intergenerational relation between the senior volunteers and the disabled people and their active involvement in the support and assistance to the users. In fact the volunteers, during the 21 days of mobility abroad, were fully integrated in the hosting organizations, participating to activities and initiatives and suggesting activities themselves to the users, sharing their enthusiasm, expertise and culture in a climate of reciprocal exchange.

The value and impact of the project was increased by the participation of 2 volunteers with disability and 2 volunteers coming from a disadvantaged socio-cultural background.

In this way a virtuous cycle of non formal learning for the senior volunteers and the participating organizations was created, through the sharing of experience, knowledge and methods, and it had a positive effect on the disabled users as indirect beneficiaries of the project.

The European population is aging rapidly due to low birth rates and increasing life expectancy: Eurostat's population projections suggest that there will be less than two people of working age (15 to 64 years) for every older person aged 65 or more in the EU-27 by 2060, compared with a ratio of almost four to one today. The EU-27's labor force had 58.1 million persons aged 50 to 64 and a further 4.1 million aged 65 or over in 2010. Those aged 50 to 64 accounted for just less than one quarter (24.7 %) of all economically active persons (those in employment and those unemployed) in the EU-27 in 2010. Almost one fifth (19.9 %) of the EU-27 workforce aged 50 to 64 were employed on a part-time basis in 2010. (From EUROBAROMETER - Active ageing and solidarity between generations — a statistical portrait of the European Union 2012).

This information underlines the increasing number of healthy people +50 with much free time; furthermore the average number of years in absence of disability for people over 65 is more or less 15 in Italy and almost the same in the other European Countries. It's a recent phenomenon that requires the institution of opportunities of social active participation that could avoid the risks associated with isolation, loss of confidence or reduced self-esteem; at the same time, an increasing involvement of the elderly could bring additional economic and social value. Active participation of older persons may be promoted through a range of initiatives and among these, engaging older persons in community initiatives and voluntary work; it is as an important contribution to civic participation – promoting social cohesion and social inclusion, that allow elder people to fill useful for society, to continue learning and to share their knowledge and experience, while also offering the opportunity to engage with friends and other generations, increasing their mental well-being while acting as resource for their community. Furthermore Volunteer work also has the potential to provide an exchange of experiences between the generations. However almost two thirds (63.8 %) of the EU-27 population (aged 15 and above) questioned in March 2009 agreed that there were not enough opportunities for older and younger people to meet and work together in associations and local community initiatives; the percentage of retired people who does volunteering activities is only the 33.8% and the percentage of retired persons that plans to do this is even less, only the 10.1%. As regards the estimates about active participation/voluntary work in at least one organization for people over 55, they are just over the 25%.

The two partner organizations for the project “Active Senior Citizens: volunteers for social inclusion” are actively involved in the promotion of social inclusion of young people (over 18 yaers old) with disabilities through different activities and approaches, them both manages a day care center. In particular Associazione Uniamoci Onlus deals with the realization of social inclusion of young adult with a physical disability stimulating their autonomy, interpersonal skills, language knowledge, initiative and ITC skills; the young people with disabilities are actively involved in activities as the management and the writing of articles for a news paper, the management of a web-radio, the realization

of projects under Youth in Action (youth initiatives, exchanges and seminars), attendance of computer, language and painting courses, training experiences abroad (Leonardo da Vinci Projects), conduction of social awareness campaigns as active citizens. Fundația Creștină Diakonia Sfântu Gheorghe takes care of young adult people with physical, mental or emotional disability with the main aim of work inclusion. It implements its activities with the integration of different therapies (ex Psychotherapy, Chino therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, swimming therapy) and individual support for the strengthening of key competencies (autonomy, etc.) and in terms of career choices.

The exchange of volunteers, people who usually participate to the work of the organizations or people that intend to be involved in the future, will allow to share the expertise of the two organizations through the direct experience and work of volunteers, will motivate them and will make them more active in the local community empowered by the knowledge and experience made abroad.

Our aim is to actively involve the senior citizens in this process, accordingly to the definition of active ageing by The World Health Organization as “the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age”. We think that the elder people are dynamic members of our society: they can transmit knowledge and experience to the future generations, through their active involvement they can give a great support to the society and to themselves (avoiding isolation, marginalization, lack of self-confidence, reduction of the social relations). In the publication ‘Active ageing and solidarity between generations’ by EESC is stated: “Ageing should not only be active, but also healthy, dignified and enjoyable. Hence, ‘active’ ageing should not be seen just as the possibility of prolonging working life or social involvement ... Expanding opportunities for volunteering is one way to keep older people engaged in society, and there is a growing recognition of the value of years of experience and knowledge”.

“Active Senior Citizens: volunteers for social inclusion” pursues the general objective to promote the active participation of senior volunteers in the realization of social inclusion, giving an European dimension to the local work of the organizations involved thanks to the cultural and experiential contribution of volunteers from another European Country.

### Activities, tasks and learning outcomes for the volunteers

The volunteers were prepared to the mobility and the multicultural and volunteering experience participating to some meetings with the staff of the sending organizations in order to learn something about the culture of the hosting country, the hosting organization aims and activities. They were trained on the specific kind of disability they would face during the volunteering activities abroad, they were supported in the preparation of the material on their culture to show to the disabled people and staff of the hosting organization and in the planning of activities they could propose to the users of the hosting organization. They had a language preparation suited to their needs.

During the 21 days abroad the volunteers were actively involved in the daily work of the hosting organizations, supporting their staff in the development of the activities addressed to the young/adult people with disability. They had the opportunity to learn the specific approach to disability of the hosting organization and to learn practical skills about the management of a group of disabled learners, the implementation of recreational activities, the kind of support and assistance that everyone needs in relation to their personal features, they learnt how to interact with people with disability in an inclusive way. Furthermore they presented their own culture and they managed, with the support of the staff of the hosting organization, some workshops and activities related to their home language teaching, manufacture, painting, cooking, playing or anything else related to their own abilities. The volunteering experience abroad gave them the opportunity to analyse and discuss the social welfare policy and the lifestyle of a person with disability in another Country, making comparisons and developing new ideas for social inclusion in a European dimension.

The staff of the hosting organization drew up a detailed programme of activities for each week of the mobility and was at complete disposal of the volunteers supporting and actively involving them.

By the way, the volunteers' experience wasn't over once back home: the two organizations involved them in further initiatives, creating a sustainable cooperation. The senior volunteers who intended to participate to the project and the ones who already had their mobility experience, were involved in the local activities of the project and in the welcoming of the hosted volunteers, sharing their spare time with them and lay the foundation for their active involvement in the work of the organization and for the creation of real friendship among the Italian and Romanian participants.





**TOLD BY THE PARTICIPANTS**

**Buongiorno Sicilia e Palermo**

Io sono un uomo della Romania di nazionalità ungherese, vivo nella città Sfântu Gheorghe. Io sono venuto in questa città per un programma di educazione GRUNDTVIG SENIOR, il nome del progetto è “Active Senior Citizens: Volunteers for social inclusion”. Sono un volontario in questo programma. Qui ho conosciuto in questa Associazione Uniamoci Onlus, un gruppo di persone molto buone e molto attive. Io aiuto i ragazzi e le ragazze con molto piacere. Loro sono un gruppo molto buono e bello. Mi piace lavorare con loro. Mi piace molto questo paese, questa città e tutto quanto.... Io ho scritto poco perchè non conosco bene la lingua italiana. RINGRAZIO DI CUORE. MULTUMESC EUROPA; MUTUMESC PALERMO; KOSZONOM.

*Nagy Andras*





## In Palermo: I don't believe it!

When my President from IRIS HAUSE in Sf Gheorghe told me that I would go to Sicily in Palermo at Associazione UNIAMOCI ONLUS, I thought he was making a joke with me. At home in Romania I'm working with mental disabled young people. During this project "Active Senior Citizens: volunteers for social inclusion" we participated in the Grundtvig Programme for senior volunteers. It is the first time that I take part in such a programme and I was waiting to see everything: how the people are and, the most important, how they are working with young disabled youth. In Palermo I found very friendly and peaceful people. ►





I found this way of acting in the relationship between volunteers from Uniamoci Onlus and the young disabled people they are working with. I learned a lot while watching them, how they speak and act together. I want to keep in my mind forever these days together with them. Everibody, even who couldn't speak, was so frendly with us that now, after two weeks, I feel them like relatives. Thanks Sicilia for your wonderful people. We visited a lot of places here in Palermo and the surroundings but for me the most important are the relations, I can say friendships, we have now with people from here.

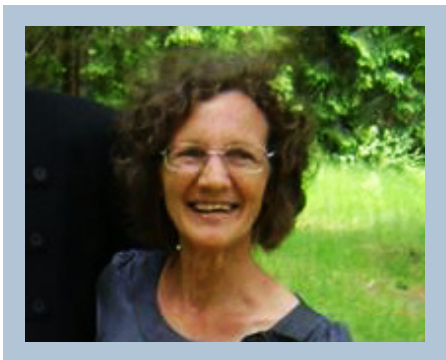
About disabled people I think they are for us "the others", I believe that God never creates "mistakes", that everybody has it's own importance. I found a good slogan for everything happened to me here in Palermo: "If your mind perceive it and your heart can believe it, than you can achive it" Will Rogers.

*Timar Elisabeta*



## Erdely, terra incantata

Da Bucarest a Ploiesti attraverso una vasta pianura si sale lungo una valle sempre più solitaria su per i monti Carpazi. La strada attraversa foreste dagli alberi altissimi ed il suolo quasi senza vegetazione. La distesa dall'altro lato è meravigliosa! Un altopiano esteso, attraversato da piccoli fiumi, tutto circondato da monti con nuvolette sopra, un mare di verde in tutte le sfumature circondato dalle montagne come da mura di protezione. Nei campi si vedono spesso delle cicogne, anche sette-otto insieme, a conferma della natura incontaminata. La Transilvania è una terra di contrasti, accanto l'autostrada si notano spesso carretti trainati da cavalli, accanto al trattore modernissimo una macchina di trent'anni fa. Brasov con il suo centro storico famoso e le industrie quasi tutte ferme; vendute a stranieri e poi chiuse per esportare materie prime e creare lavoro altrove.



L'arrivo a Sepsiszent György, cittadina di 62000 abitanti ai piedi delle colline. La povertà è visibile ma anche la grande dignità della popolazione. Le piccole casette curate, i giardinetti puliti dove non mancano mai i fiori. Ci sono pochi negozi grandi, quasi solo negozi second-hand per l'abbigliamento ma relativamente molti fiorai.

La cultura e le radici etniche sono molto sentite. Il 70% degli abitanti sono ungheresi, il 27% romeni ed il 3% zingari. Solo dopo la caduta del comunismo la lingua ungherese può essere insegnata nuovamente nelle scuole. ►





Anche le religioni sono molto praticate, cattolici, riformati e ortodossi vivono in totale tolleranza l'uno per l'altro. La popolazione, i Szekely, tuttora si sentono ungheresi, prima cantano l'inno ungherese e subito dopo quello romeno. Sognano l'indipendenza per poter sfruttare meglio le molte risorse del sottosuolo. Gente dignitosa e fiera che ha colto il meglio dai vari invasori e lo ha fatto proprio durante i secoli. Ogni forma d'arte viene curata, dalla musica alla scultura (davanti le casette i tipici portoni Szakely intagliati) soprattutto di legno, dalla pittura ai lavoretti manuali. Ognuno crea qualcosa per fare piccoli regali; pezzi di cuore fatti con le proprie mani e offerti con umiltà e amore.

Persone povere, che possiedono niente più del necessario, ma danno il meglio di quel poco. Dopo una settimana di lavoro, spesso 10-12 ore di lavoro al giorno, cucinano le loro specialità per l'ospite e lo portano a vedere le bellezze del territorio.

L'impegno sociale è molto alto nel-

la maggior parte della popolazione, molto meno da parte dello stato che risparmia e taglia fondi anche fino al 40%. Alla Diakonia IRISZ-HAZ a Sepsiszentgyörgy ogni disabile viene inserito in un gruppo di lavoro adatto alle sue aspirazioni e possibilità: produzione di candele, arti varie, pittura, negozio d'abbigliamento usato, produzione di carta igienica e la fattoria. Lavorando insieme per tre settimane e stando a contatto con queste persone, anche senza molte parole si scoprono tanti segreti come la ragazza innamorata del cuoco, Robitschko che non si sente bene in famiglia, Lilly a cui è morto il padre un anno fa. Con alcuni pensi di non stabilire nessun contatto, e all'improvviso per strada ti senti chiamare "Silvia-mâmă" (nonna Silvia) e vieni travolta da Sonin (ragazzo autistico) alto quasi 2 metri e pesante 100 chili che ti si butta addosso. O il ragazzo epilettico che ti regala il suo libro che porta sempre con se, così ogni volta che lo prendi in mano ti ricorderai di Andreasz.

Tanti ricordi belli, che a distanza di un mese sono ancora più belli!

Neanche la Transilvania è priva di piccoli inconvenienti. Molto brutti sono i casermoni abitativi dei tempi del comunismo, blocchi rettangolari tutti uguali, belli sono però i campi giochi tra due file di questi blocchi con gli attrezzi in legno e l'erba.

Le industrie che spesso non rispettano le norme ambientali, i cavi elettrici e telefonici che attraversano il paesaggio, il cattivo stato delle strade secondarie, quasi mai asfaltate sono un neo altamente ripagato dalla natura rigogliosa.

Patate, mais e grano, bietole da zucchero e ortaggi, è tutto coltivato ai piedi delle montagne. I prati sono un

mare di fiori e colori; timo, origano, maggiorana e menta crescono dappertutto. Acque termali e minerali, piccoli fiumi e laghi nel cratere di un vulcano sorprendono continuamente. Le città come Cristien, Rosnov e Bra-zov danno la sensazione di essere nel nord della Germania ed in tempi passati. La Transilvania è un paradiso per chi ama la natura, l'arte in tutte le sue sfaccettature e la tranquillità. Erdely e Sakelyföld con il suo popolo fiero resteranno per sempre nel mio cuore.

Grazie alla Diakonie Irisz-Haz, Uniamoci Onlus e alla Commissione Europea.

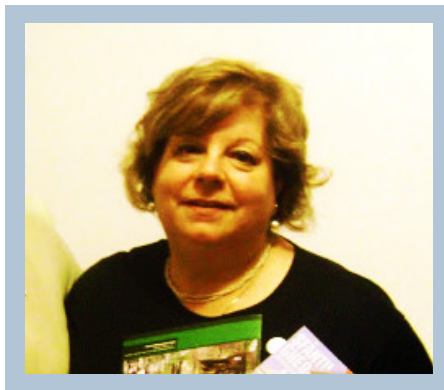
*Silvia Schirmer*





## "Active Senior Citizens: volunteers for social inclusion"

Ringrazio l'Associazione Uniamoci Onlus e l'Associazione Diakonia di Sfântu Gheorghe in Romania per avermi dato l'opportunità di partecipare al progetto Europeo "Active Senior Citizens: volunteers for social inclusion" che, in quanto genitore di un figlio disabile, mi ha permesso di scoprire un nuovo approccio alla disabilità. Tutto è cominciato quando mia figlia Flavianna, disabile in carrozzina, mi comunica che Davide Di Pasquale Presidente dell'Associazione Uniamoci Onlus mi propone un viaggio in Romania di 20 giorni non da sola ma con Silvia. "Pensavo fosse impossibile e non fattibile: lasciare la famiglia mai!" Questa è stata la mia risposta a Flavy e di conseguenza accantonò la proposta. Fino a quando Flavy è tornata alla carica imponendomi di essere le sue gambe e la sua testa. Se Roger Rabbit ha visto gli uccellini con la botta ricevuta e non



le stelle io li ho visti entrambi! e quindi la mia risposta è stata: "ok Flavy". L'incontro con Davide diventa decisivo. Io parto per un'esperienza bella e allo stesso tempo un'incognita. Ed eccomi arrivata in Romania ho trascorso 20 giorni con emozioni continue positive e negative, anche con commozione per alcuni eventi, ma vi posso assicurare che sono cresciuta (non come peso anche se speravo di ritornare "magrissima") acquisendo un'esperienza unica. L'accoglienza del primo giorno è stata emozionante, Imola e Berta sono





state Angeli nel mio percorso perchè anche se non ci capivamo con la lingua il linguaggio dell'amore ha vinto. Abbracci, sguardi, gestualità e linguaggio del corpo sono stati i protagonisti di questa esperienza e udite udite abbiamo imparato vicendevolmente, io e i ragazzi disabili e i collaboratori di Diakonia, un po' di vocaboli di lingua diversa e vi posso assicurare che i ragazzi/e disabili presenti in Diakonia hanno imparato la canzone della Vecchia Fattoria in italiano. C'è stato un momento culinario e lo sfincione Palermitano è arrivato a Sfantu Gheorghie. Risultato? Buonissimo. Pensate che il Caciocavallo in Romania è il "formaggio" per eccellenza. Ho avuto un'altra esperienza indimenticabile: un pellegrinaggio a piedi, non vi dico i Km perchè sono stata messa a dura prova (l'Acchianata di Santa Rosalia è una passeggiata). Purtroppo non essendo abituata a questi lunghi percorsi a piedi, vista la mia stanchezza e il treno che partiva tardi per tornare a

casa, Berta (accompagnatrice ufficiale) pensa che essendo in stazione potrebbe passare qualche conoscente e infatti dopo pochi minuti il problema si risolve! sapete quando si dice al posto giusto nel momento giusto. Invito l'amico di Berta a scendere per conoscere Palermo e l'Associazione Uniamoci ma graziosamente rifiutava. Arrivati a casa saluto, ringrazio e via. La mattina ringrazio Berta per la disponibilità del suo amico ma la risposta mi ha spiazzato perchè non era un suo amico ma una conoscenza occasionale! Per loro è normale fare così, per noi un po' meno visti i tempi che corrono!! Chiusa questa parentesi occupiamoci dell'esperienza didattica educativa dei ragazzi disabili.

Le attività svolte sono state interessanti e istruttive: psicomotricità, piscina, palestra, scandivano le giornate e il mio percorso era con un gruppo che aveva come Tutor Andreas (che già aveva conosciuto i ragazzi di Uniamoci con lo stesso Progetto). ►

Sono stata accolta e voluta bene subito anche se qualcuno per problematiche difficili non mi ha permesso di entrare in punta di piedi nel suo mondo ma vi posso assicurare che ho ricevuto tanto da Robicska con un abbraccio quando stavo salutandolo per la fine di questa esperienza di vita. La dignità e il rispetto della loro persona sono presenti nelle attività che riescono o quasi a svolgere. Per ognuno un percorso individualizzato e di gruppo, pensate che producono nell'Ass. Diakonia: carta igienica che viene acquistata dagli alberghi e ristoranti, sacchetti di carta per lo shopping con un procedimento che li rende eleganti.

Tutto questo favorisce un migliore funzionamento della loro integrazione sociale e autostima.

Non ci sono parole ma tanta riflessione. Considerate che ho visitato 3 centri: Diakonia per gli adulti (di cui sopra ho scritto), Irish House per i bambini disagiati, anche qui un'esperienza indimenticabile, finito l'orario scolastico

i bambini raggiungono il centro e li trovano Tutor e un pasto caldo, anche qui viene valorizzata l'utenza perché giocando con acqua e sapone lavorano la lana grezza creando cuscini per sedie con allegre faccine, orecchini e ciondoli.

Farm, altro centro, è una fattoria con tanto di animali, galline, porcellini ecc. e coltivazione di verdura di stagione. Tutto questo viene gestito dai ragazzi/e disabili con i tutor. La produzione viene usata da una Super Cuoca che prepara ogni giorno i pranzi in Diakonia.

Ecco i nomi dei ragazzi presenti in Diakonia:

Timea, Marian, Agota, Lili, Gyopar, Sorin, Bogdan, Ionut, Evike, Eugen, André, Robert, BuglarKa, Livia, Timea, Eva, Bendeguz, Levente, Robicska, Robert. Potrei scrivere per ognuno di loro cosa ho ricevuto ma ho lasciato lì il mio cuore rappresentandolo con un cartoncino rosso con dentro i loro nomi.



Finisco come ho cominciato nel ringraziare il Presidente Peter Makkai, la sua famiglia, i Tutor tutti e la Cuoca che è stata un'ottima insegnante e mi ha donato qualche ricetta. Ma permettetemi di finire con Davide, Eleonora, Martina e Silvia che hanno creduto in me per rappresentare UNIAMOCI ONLUS.

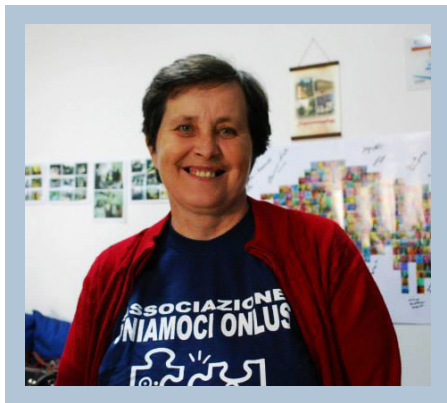
*Elisabetta Napolitano*

## Un abbraccio da Ida

Questa è stata un'esperienza bella che porterò sempre nel mio cuore. Ho fatto nuove amicizie, ho visto molte cose belle ma non dimenticherò MAI tutto l'amore che ho visto negli occhi dei ragazzi dell'Associazione che non dimenticherò mai.

Grazie a tutti voi un abbraccio!

*Mamma Ida*

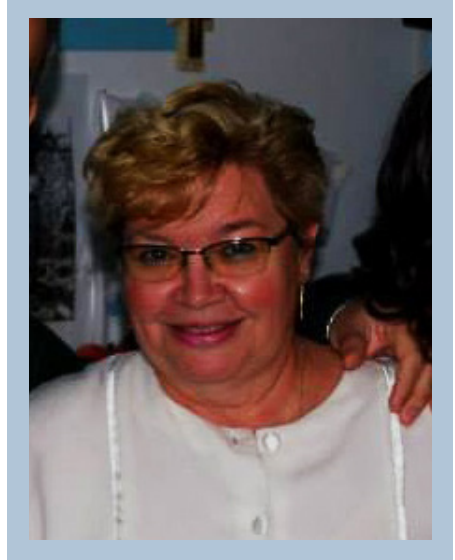




## La mia esperienza a Palermo

Dopo 3 settimane mi fa piacere scrivere ancora al forum per i miei nuovi amici di Uniamoci Onlus di Palermo. Vi volevo dire che mi mancherete perchè penso che mi sono affezionata tanto e restano oramai pochi giorni, abbiamo visto cose molto interessanti e belle e le ricorderemo con molto piacere. E' stata un'esperienza importante che non dimenticheremo MAI Tanti abbracci.

*Ps. Un ringraziamento particolare a tutte le PERSONE che mi hanno aiutata a comprendere e parlare italiano.*



*Berta Baba*





## Cari amici

Miei cari amici, io sto tornando a casa con ricordi molto molto belli. Sono molto felice di avervi incontrati; durante queste tre settimane, che sono volate così in fretta, ho ricevuto tanta gentilezza. Dove c'è amore non c'è niente di impossibile. Di ogni piccola cosa bisogna guardare la faccia giusta. Amo tutto di voi e voglio conservarlo nel cuore per tutta la vita.

*Grazie di tutto e vi auguro il meglio!*

*Kovacs Elena*



Watch the registrations of the web-radio programmes on “Radio Senza barriere” (the web radio managed by Associazione Uniamoci Onlus) with interviews to the senior volunteers:

- <https://youtu.be/5UgJm1WzepE>
- <https://youtu.be/NID6nr9aUPA>
- [https://youtu.be/n991\\_HTgi-k](https://youtu.be/n991_HTgi-k)



**“Active Senior Citizens: volunteers for social inclusion”** derives from the willingness of Associazione Uniamoci Onlus to contribute and extend the process started with the previous Grundtvig Senior Volunteering project “Free age: senior volunteers meeting disabled people”, realized in partnership with the German organization Diakonie Werk Bremen, that was declared STAR PROJECT by the European Commission.

The implementation of ASC was proposed by Associazione Uniamoci Onlus, coordinator for the project, to the Romanian partner Fundația Creștină Diakonia Sfântu Gheorghe - Casa Irisz and they together worked on the application.

### **COORDINATOR - ASSOCIAZIONE UNIAMOCI ONLUS**

Uniamoci Onlus” is a no profit organization that works in the field of integration and social assistance of young/adult people with disability fostering their full inclusion in the society. It is based in Palermo (ITALY) and its head quarter is a building confiscated to the Mafia.

The objectives of Associazione Uniamoci Onlus can be summarized as follows:

- Creation of an inclusive environment where young people and young people with disability can participate to educational and socialization activities, in a group setting and pursuing personalized objectives.
- Promotion of volunteering, at a local and an international level, active citizenship, non formal education in a multicultural environment and European mobility for young people, young people with disability, volunteers and professionals in the social field through the implementation of stages abroad, youth exchanges, partnerships and projects about volunteering.
- Support to the young people with disabilities in the development of practical skills that can be spent in carrying out specific tasks in the work of the association and/or in the field of work.
- Realization of positive actions related to the social and cultural promotion at a local level through the implementation of seminars, workshops and international conferences, the realization and diffusion of video-spot, the creation of publications and guide-books on the theme of inclusion of people with disability and through the active involvement of volunteers and young people with disabilities in the implementation of local youth initiatives and raising awareness activities.

Furthermore at an European level, Uniamoci Onlus implements the European social policy within the Erasmus+ Programme and Anna Lindh Foundation, spreading the European values at a local level, spreading the principles of inclusion at an international level and contributing to the exchange of good practices among European and extra-European organizations that are active in field of social inclusion of people with disabilities and more in general in the social field.

*Read more at [www.uniamocionlus.org](http://www.uniamocionlus.org)*

### **PARTNER - Fundația Creștină Diakonia Sfântu Gheorghe - Casa Irisz**

The Christian Foundation Diakonia Sf. Gheorghe is active in the area of home care, as well as in the disability field. Irisz House is a diaconal day care centre. It addresses people with physical, mental or emotional disability aged over 18 years of age and offer treatment with the goal of integration into the workforce. We encourage people to develop their personal and professional perspectives and help them to participate actively in the integration process. In connection with the integration of different therapies (eg Psychoterapie, kineto therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, swimming therapy) are caused by the young adults receive individual support. We support them in strengthening key competencies (autonomy, etc.) and in terms of career choices. Every youth has its own development program, which is documented in the context of education planning. To achieve the greatest possible support for young people, we work with the families. Due to the holistic development of many young people achieve progress of Intergation successfully both in society and in the workplace.

*Read more at <http://iriszhaz.blogspot.it>*

ASC **encouraged the active participation in society of the senior people** who participated in the project as volunteers: they got a renewed motivation to the social work thanks to the personal positive effects of the volunteering experience abroad that represented a new and attractive non-formal learning opportunity based on the Learning by doing method for the senior volunteers who participated to the project.

It was able to **promote mobility and multicultural experiences of elder people**, allowing them to perceive themselves as European Citizens: 11 people over 50 years old stayed abroad for 21 days, far from their families and from their habits. One of them was 80 years old and another one travelled for the first time by plane and for the first time he was abroad!

The project was successful in **stimulating the participation as volunteers of people with less opportunities**, coming from disadvantaged areas, unemployed or retired in order to actively involve and include them in the society: 2 disabled people (one blind volunteer and one with mobility problems); 2 disadvantaged people took part to project, 4 retired people, 2 unemployed ones.

The involvement of the volunteers in activities connected with the promotion of social inclusion of people with disability allowed to **promote assistance and care of disabled people** fostering social cohesion and social inclusion, fighting discrimination and promoting equal rights, spreading the European values and knocking down the social barriers and at the same time it allowed disabled people to make a multicultural experience and to face with different approaches to disability and different methodologies.

For sure the international cooperation started with ASC among the two partner organizations led to the **exchange of good practices and expertise in field of disability** and laid the foundation for the construction of an inclusive society discussing, learning and creating new European strategies to realize social inclusion. The partnership created will be sustainable thanks to future joint projects.

“Active Senior Citizens: volunteers for social inclusion” is a contribution to the reduction of the persistent problem of social exclusion, isolation, loss of confidence or reduced self-esteem of people out or is coming out from the productive economic circle of society: lifelong learning can both improve the volunteers’ skills and encourage active citizenship and personal autonomy allowing them to play a key role in the society and not only within the project.

## **BECOME A SENIOR VOLUNTEER ABROAD!**

### **Volunteering is for everyone**

Seniors represents a source of knowledge, experience and skills that can be really useful to organisations and individuals.

Reaching out and helping others gives you a sense of purpose and working with other volunteers, provides you with social relationships. This experience will allow you to explore and be part of a new culture while at the same time use your skills to help the young adult with disability in the local communities. You will learn new abilities and discover your potential and your importance for the society.

***“It is always a good time to learn”***

**VISIT THE WEB SITE** <http://activeseniorcitizens.wix.com/activeseniorcitizens>

**READ THE BLOG** <https://activeseniorcitizensblog.wordpress.com>

**VISIT THE Fb page** <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Active-Senior-Citizens-volunteers-for-social-inclusion/243659825813867?fref=ts>















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This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.