



# evars

Elderly volunteers - A Resource for the Society.

## Newsletter - The EVARS Project

### Welcome and goodbye

Welcome to the fourth and final issue of the EVARS Project newsletter.

The EVARS project is an EU project supported by funds from The Lifelong Learning Programme. We have used the newsletters throughout the project to provide a quick summary of what has happened in the project and the results we have produced.

The EVARS project has now come to an end and all our results are presented on the EVARS website on

[www.evars.eu](http://www.evars.eu)

### How to use the EVARS website

The EVARS project was developed to assist local communities to improve their collaboration with civil society organizations and elderly volunteers, in order for them to engage in local community activities and “light” welfare assignments.

Being engaged as a volunteer in local communities has to be a win – win situation for both the volunteer and the local authority, or civil society organisation that the volunteer is engaged with.

The objective of the EVARS project has been to ensure this win – win situation through, on the one hand, the development of course materials for volunteers and, on the other hand, the development of a coaching concept for local authorities to engage more strategically with local volunteering.

The EVARS website is now presented as a toolbox, where stakeholders all over Europe can download the course material for free. The course material gives concrete directions on relevant subjects, didactics and proposals on how to make a good mix of theoretic lessons and physical and creative activities.

As the EVARS project has collaborated with 16 pilot local authorities in 4 countries, it is also possible to get inspiration from the website on how local authorities actually work with volunteering and active engagement of elderly citizens in local communities.

## **EVARS recommendations**

One of the deliverables of EVARS is a list of recommendations and factors to consider and put in place, in order to ensure a win – win situation when local authorities engage with elderly volunteers. Based on the practical work with local authorities and the evaluation of the project, the following strategic and practical recommendations have been elaborated.

### **Strategic factors which promote implementation**

1. There is a political decision to strengthen cooperation with elderly volunteers, for example by designing and adopting a voluntary policy, civil society strategy or similar initiatives.
2. There is a broad consensus within the civil society and among volunteer associations towards the political strategy adopted. Maybe even citizens and organizations have contributed in formulating the policy.
3. The local authority has designated a permanent contact person and/or professional unit that handles relations with volunteers and civil society and is responsible for the implementation of the strategy. The coordinator or unit coordinates activities with the volunteers in relation to the municipal strategy.
4. A forum or framework has been established in which volunteers can get and give feedback and where they can share experiences.
5. Clear objectives for the engagement with volunteers have been formulated, which are known both to citizens, professionals and volunteers so that the possible contribution of the volunteers, and how they can contribute, is clear to all.
6. Recruitment of elderly volunteers, as well as professionals for the training activities, must comply with specific consideration of what the goal of the program is, for example, to promote social inclusion, strengthening of specific areas within the school system or supporting the solidation between generations.
7. The course is initiated with a clear ownership – e.g. through representation by the management level of the local authority at the first and last module of the training course

### **Practical factors which promote implementation**

1. The training is carried out by professionals and people who have teaching experience, special insight into the target group and substantial knowledge of the different training subjects.
2. Upon completion of the training course, a plan must be available on how the new volunteers can apply their skills
3. Procedures and systems are established, which maintain and develop the volunteers' skills
4. The volunteers have the opportunity to share their knowledge in a network - taking into account the confidentiality rules

## EVARS final conference



The final conference in EVARS was organised in the South Denmark European Office on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October and was a great success. The conference was organised as a thematic event focusing on “Volunteering and Active Ageing”, where the results of the EVARS project, was put into a broader European perspective through presentations from important European stakeholder such as AGE Platform Europe, European Volunteer Center and Council of European Municipalities and Regions.

One of the pilot local authorities from the project, Nordfyn Municipality from the Region of Southern Denmark, participated in the conference, and showed how they have used their participation in the EVARS project to create the local Volunteer Center, where EVARS training is now offered to the volunteers. This presentation was very inspiring for the participants as it really showed how to engage with volunteers on local level.

All presentations from the conference can be downloaded from the website

## Goodbye

It has been a great pleasure for all project partners to collaborate in the EVARS project.

We hope that you will find inspiration on the EVARS website and we wish you good reading.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you want to know more or exchange experiences with us. You can find our contact details on the website.