



Asociatia Voluntariat Pentru Viata

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**EUROPEAN
SOLIDARITY
CORPS**

Infopack ESC Volunteering project “Seeds of Action”

**15 April 2020 – 14 November 2020
Marasesti, ROMANIA**

Project description

Health is a fundamental resource for individuals, communities and societies as a whole. For the individual, enjoying a good health is of paramount importance. At the same time, a generally good level of population health is indispensable for the growth and development of societies. Elderly people report more often than young people their health damage and complain of health to a greater extent than young people.

In Marasesti there is a Residential Care Home for Elderly (“O Noua Sansa”), where 33 seniors are living and which has been operating since 2011.

Peasant and agroecological farming are dominant forms of agriculture in Marasesti and its component villages, many times because farmers in this small town cannot afford the cost of pesticides and have used different prescriptions to combat pests or diseases, such as: ash used as a fertilizer, hot pepper juice as insecticide or macerate of nettles as fertilizer and insecticide.

The project involves 8 ESC volunteers who are going to engage with community members in promoting a **healthy lifestyle** such as *building a healthy vegetable garden* with the seniors, *preparing canned vegetables* in a traditional way and *spending quality free time with the elderly* performing occupational therapy activities, ludo therapy, ergotherapy, melotherapy, dance. The project aims to involve young volunteers in activities that will take place with the members of the local community and the elderly institutionalized in the Care Home for Elderly Marasesti.

The purpose of this project proposal is to improve the well-being and quality of life of the elderly from the Care Home “O Noua Sansa” Marasesti.

The theme of our project proposal is based on the concept of **active aging**, generating activities that can keep the elderly involved in the social life of the community they are part of. Through this project, we want to improve the well-being and quality of life, socialization and social integration through the involvement of the elderly in ergotherapy, ludo therapy, occupational therapy and leisure activities.

Short-term objectives of the project:

1. Acquiring knowledge among the 8 European volunteers on eco-agriculture and peasant farming during the 7-month volunteering stage.
2. Developing social and personal skills among the 8 ESC volunteers, through their interaction with the families carrying out agricultural activities and the elderly people within the Care Home, during the volunteering period.
3. Increasing self-esteem among the 33 elderly people residing in the Care Home by including them in gardening and leisure activities during the project.

Long-term objectives:

1. Increasing social inclusion of 33 elderly people by engaging them in occupational and social therapy activities, counteracting the negative effects of depression generated by loneliness and inactivity during the 14-month project.
2. Promoting a healthy lifestyle among the 8 ESC volunteers and members of the Marasesti community through gardening and eco-farming until the end of the project.
3. Creating good practices in the local community of promoting volunteering through direct contact of the 8 ESC volunteers with families and community lifestyle during the 7-month stage.
4. Getting knowledge and practical application of knowledge related to eco-agriculture by practicing and transmitting them to current and future generations.
5. Consolidating collaboration between community members and non-governmental organizations in order to prevent marginalization of socially disadvantaged people.

Duration of activity: 7 months from **15 April 2020 – 14 November 2020**

Venue: The project takes place in Marasesti town.

Project activities:

Through the project activities, we want to demonstrate that health is an important dimension of quality of life and promote the adoption of a healthy lifestyle especially among the elderly in the Care Home and in general among the community members. That is why we want to develop a volunteering program that will take place in the farmers' gardens in Marasesti and its surroundings to convince the young participants in the project to adopt a healthy lifestyle and to inspire interest in eco-agriculture activities but at the same time, to multiply their experience among the elderly in the Care Home by carrying out various occupational therapies, ergotherapy, socialization and ludotherapy.

The volunteers will carry out their activities in 2 teams of 4 volunteers, and weekly by rotation, a team will participate in **eco-farming activities** hosted and initiated by two families from Marasesti town and another team in **occupational therapy**, ergotherapy, socialization and ludotherapy with the seniors in the Marasesti Care Home for Elderly. Within the host families, the volunteers will participate in gardening activities, from growing seedlings, grooming, harvesting and processing to obtain organic products, as well as processing vegetables to obtain: tomato juice, zucusca, pickled cabbage, pickles, stew vegetables.

Expected learning outcomes:

By the end of the 7-month stage the volunteers will be able to improve/acquire:

- knowledge and experience in performing occupational therapy activities and eco-farming activities;
- communication skills in English and his/her own mother language; knowledge of basic Romanian language;
- skills to work in an international team;
- skills in managing the relationship with elderly;
- knowledge of the organization of NGOs, experience in volunteering and interculturalism;
- time management skills, team coordination skills, they will learn what it means to bring a change in the environment where they live and they will also develop the European and intercultural dimension;
- entrepreneurial skills – the volunteers will develop their sense of initiative and entrepreneurship by designing and coordinating project activities;
- coordination skills, teamwork, leadership, partnership management and project management, that serve them in future projects;
- the volunteers will also improve their social and networking skills and will become more motivated to engage in community life as a result of their working with elders and the community members during the project;
- development of some life skills and transversal key competences useful for their personal and professional future;
- knowledge about the Romanian culture, traditions, customs, gastronomy.

Other details:

Accommodation: The volunteers will live in 2 flats in Marasesti, in shared bedrooms, individual beds, with common area, shared cooking, washing, laundry and social facilities, free wi-fi included.

Food: Volunteers will receive a monthly food allowance of 150 Euro to buy food products and cook for themselves. They will also receive a monthly allowance of 90 Euro in form of “pocket money”.

Local Transport: The volunteers’ flat apartments are situated near the location of the activities, so the volunteers will walk to the place where the activities take place.

Holidays: ESC volunteers will work 6 hours per day, 5 days a week, two consecutive days off per week and two days off per month.
National Holidays are also free days.

Travel: The volunteers together with their Sending Organisations will be responsible for arranging their travel. The travel costs will be reimbursed at the end of the project according to the distance band limits imposed by the European Commission.

The budget for travel costs is: € 275/participant

The volunteers need to arrive at Bucharest – Otopeni (Henri Coanda International Airport). From Bucharest to Focsani/Marasesti there are regular buses every day directly from the airport. We can arrange to book the bus tickets for you.

Training during the project

The volunteers will be accompanied and supported at all times during the activities by coordinators and staff of our organization and they will receive training at the beginning of their stage to become familiar with the way the activities will be implemented.

The volunteers will attend the On-Arrival Training and Mid-Term Evaluation, organized by the Romanian National Agency.

The volunteers will also receive Romanian language training for the first 3 months.

Other recommendations

◆ you should bring your regular clothes and personal hygiene products. Bed clothes, covers and towels are provided by host organisation.

◆ in Romania it is usually very cold in the winter and sometimes there is a lot of snow. During December, January and February the temperatures can go down to -15° below 0° Celsius), so you should also bring some warm clothes with you: a warm hat and gloves, boots, a winter jacket!

Project Environment



Mărășești is a small town in Vrancea county, situated in the east of Romania. **Mărășești** is known as a town with a great historical significance because here a major battle took place during the First World War. The Mausoleum of Marasesti, one of the most important memorial sites in Europe, was built in the place where, in the summer of 1917, great battles were fought between Germany and Romania. Nowadays, Mărășești is the poorest town of Vrancea County, with a population of approximately 11,000 inhabitants on the decrease comparing to previous years. The town is a disadvantaged area, with no economy and most of its inhabitants receive social security benefits or are in extreme poverty. Nevertheless, in this town there are 4 elementary schools attended by 1200 children aged 6-14 years old and one High School attended by 200 students who are facing the absence of positive role models and conscious leaders. In Marasesti there is also a Residential Care Home for Elderly ("O Noua Sansa"), where 33 seniors are living and which has been operating since 2011. The town is characterized by the absence of recreational facilities and places for youth. The offer of Marasesti town, in terms of music, sports, arts, activities for young people is almost zero and most of the youngsters are facing the absence of positive role models and conscious leaders. All projects of our organisation are targeted at children/young people/elderly in our region.

About us

Asociatia Voluntariat pentru Viata is an NGO, based in Romania, founded in November 2012 on the initiative of some specialists in the field of education, art, history, social assistance.

The mission of Asociatia Voluntariat pentru Viata is to promote volunteering and civic consciousness by developing activities that contribute to increased public awareness of the contribution of volunteers to the local community and to the society in general.

Asociatia Voluntariat pentru Viata performs the following duties:

- develops activities based on non-formal education aiming to enhance social functioning, integration and cooperation among young people;
- provides counsel, therapy and specialized assistance in order to prevent social marginalization.

Asociatia Voluntariat pentru Viata was created with the purpose of having a tool to better access the needs of young people living in the local community and to provide a concrete contribution to meeting their demands in terms of participation, active citizenship, the feeling of belonging to a common Europe, tolerance and antiracism. An important goal of our organisation is to bring young people closer to European issues, to bring a European dimension to a region which is far away from decision-making centers and peripheral in terms of geographical and economic position.

In 2012, Asociatia Voluntariat Pentru Viata started its work in Marasesti town in order to support a sustainable local development. First, the Organization developed and implemented youth projects in the framework of **Youth in Action** programme (Youth Initiatives promoting cultural heritage and environment). Then, the Organisation started to develop European projects under the **Erasmus+** programme. Starting from 2018, Asociatia Voluntariat Pentru Viata began to implement Solidarity Projects and Volunteering Projects in the framework of the new programme **European Solidarity Corps**.

A large part of the activities that we carry out are focused around supporting the disadvantaged children and their families to have access to education and involving young people, in particular, and community members in volunteering actions.

Asociatia Voluntariat pentru Viata carries out its work in partnership with local and regional schools and local social centers, offering the chance to their target groups to participate in the projects.

Our Organization also initiated an on-going collaboration with the School Centre for Inclusive Education "Elena Doamna" from Focsani, an institution which schools more than 300 students with special educational needs, but also children from families with fewer opportunities who are at risk of marginalization and social exclusion. Our Organization wants to change the view on these children and wants to start working directly with children and young people who are at risk of social marginalization because of their disabilities.