“Be the soul of the mountains”

PROJECT ROADBOOK

Erasmus+
KA1 - Learning Mobility of Individuals
KA125 - Volunteering Projects
Individual Volunteering Activities
Project title:

“Be the soul of the mountains”

Duration:

Ago 2018 – Jul 2020

Phase 1: Set 2018 – Ago 2019 (12 months)

Phase 2: Ago – 2019 – Jul 2020 (12 months)

Project description and goals:

The project "Be the soul of the mountains!" aims to promote the natural and cultural heritage of Serra da Lousã (Lousã mountains) and increase its touristic attractiveness through the development of dynamic and innovative activities, accessible to all persons. How? By creating synergies between local organisations, internacional volunteers and young and senior local people, who work together to spread the beauty and potential of these mountains nationwide and worldwide. At the same time, they share experiences and learn together in an intercultural and intergenerational context and preserve the nature for future generations.

We will host 4 volunteers in 2 different phases (1 from Germany and 1 from Russia in each phase), who will work for 12 months with Activar’s tourism office (Activar is the local development organisation promoting the project), planning and developing tourism activities and events, as well as involving the local community (especially young and senior people) in dynamics to preserve and promote the mountains’ heritage. The main goal is to provide a truly intercultural and intergenerational long-term relationship to both volunteers, youngsters and seniors, which will surely be remarkable and will help shaping their personal and social development. The project is intended to overcome the bias between generations, by approaching them and valuing the wisdom and singularity of each individual, who will enrich themself through exchange and cooperation and therefore enrich their community and surrounding contexts as well.

Volunteer’s profile:

The project targets young people (17-30 years old), including participants with fewer opportunities (facing educational difficulties, cultural differences or social obstacles). We are looking for volunteers who enjoy working with difference audiences
(youngsters, seniors, tourists) and are interested in the project’s main topics. We welcome young people who are curious and motivated to learn and share knowledge and skills in an intercultural and intergenerational environment.

**Volunteers’ tasks and activities:**

**Weekly based activities:**
- provide tourist information in Casa da Eira (Talasnal village)
- develop and implement activities to promote active ageing and contact with nature for seniors
- develop and implement environmental preservation activities for young people (12-18 years old) in the mountains and in the town (ex: creative recycling and upcycling, painting and disposing waste separation containers in the mountains, bartering markets, etc.)

**Other activities:**
- support the tourism office’s team in the development of other activities related to the project (ex: seminars, workshops, hiking, climbing, bow and arrow lessons, etc.)
- participate in the organisation of cultural activities/events for tourists and/or local community (especially during Spring/Summer)
- support/develop activities that foster closer relations between different generations to work together for a common purpose (intergenerational dialogue)
- support, develop and participate in activities that bring together the tourists and the local community (intercultural exchange)
- participate in dissemination sessions on Erasmus + and voluntary programs
- participate in the local youth fair
- participate in other regional or local events, as long as they relate to the topics or target audiences of the project (São João, Feira do mel e da castanha, etc.)
- develop a personal project

**Complementary activity:** international film festival where the volunteers will be able to screen movies from their home countries and mobilize the community for intercultural dialogue and sharing.

**Expected impact:**

The project will have impact on volunteers’ learning and their personal and social development, enabling them to be more active and participative citizens in their local communities and on an international level. The skills developed throughout the project will help them to take the lead in boosting their personal and professional
development, seeking lifelong opportunities of self-improvement. They will become role models on building up trustworthy relationships, based on respect, tolerance and cooperation between people from all ages and cultures.

The project will also contribute to increase youngsters’ , seniors’ and local people’s awareness regarding the preservation and promotion of Serra da Lousã’s heritage, the importance of intercultural and intergenerational dialogue and positive approaches to welcome tourists and to integrate immigrants and foreigners in the community. Furthermore, the project will strengthen the skills and competences of all organizations involved on international cooperation and for their future work on the project topics. It will as well contribute to increase the tourist attractiveness and the flux of tourists in Serra da Lousã, leading to an economical growth in the region and to its acknowledgement on a national level, which will empower the region to highlight local development needs to governmental and political entities at national level.

**Receiving and coordinating organisation:**

Activar - Associação de Cooperação da Lousã (Portugal) - [www.activar.org](http://www.activar.org)

Activar is a non-profit association for local development located in Lousã. Its work on the community is based on the development of social and cultural projects in several fields of action, namely: childhood, youth, sports, active ageing, nature tourism and vocational training.

Activar has strong links with the community and solid partnerships on local, national and international levels. In Activar we believe that sharing and cooperation are key drivers for improved learning, development and increased value.

The main Activities carried out by Activar are:
- Center for vocational training
- Youth office
- Childhood activities and family support (around 120 children aged 3-6)
- Nature tourism activities, including the daily open “Casa da Eira” in the schist village of Talasnal (tourism office, local products shop and exhibition center)
- Active ageing activities
- Sports (Karaté, Krav Maga, among others)
The hosting town of Lousã:

Located right in the centre of Portugal, Lousã is a town with much of interest even though many of its visitors are sports enthusiasts seeking it out for the nearby Serra da Lousã, the true highlight of this region.

Since an image is worth a thousand words, just click on the image below and see for yourself!

Direct link to the video: https://youtu.be/gyHLNDuryjE

Partners / Sending organisations:

- Eurocircle Deutschland e.V. (Germany) - www.eurocircle.de
- SFERA Movement (Russia) - www.dobrovolets.ru

Associated partners:

- ADRAS - Associação Didática e Recreativa Arte e Saber da Lousã (local association focused on preventing social exclusion through intergenerational activities based on sharing and enjoying time together) - https://pt-pt.facebook.com/AdrasLousa/
- Municipality of Lousã - www.cm-lousa.pt
Practical arrangements:

PRE-DEPARTURE

Sending organisation will:
- provide all relevant information about Erasmus+ volunteering program (EVS Info kit, EVS Charter, Erasmus+ Online Linguistic Support)
- make all the arrangements to ensure volunteer’s participation in pre-departure training (or equivalent event) and promote interaction with other volunteers and ex-volunteers
- support volunteers in the flight reservation
- provide information about insurance and administrative aspects and ensure its activation
- help volunteers to apply for European Health Insurance Card (and explain its features)
- help volunteers to apply for visa (if needed)
- diagnose eventual difficulties and anticipate special needs and risks to ensure volunteer’s safety in the project
- define communication and monitoring strategies for the course of the project together with volunteer, considering the volunteers needs and preferences, as well and the project outcomes

Receiving organisation will:
- ensure good preparation of all professionals involved in the project to welcome, integrate and collaborate with volunteers, promoting their participation and learning
- nominate a qualified tutor and mentor
- provide all relevant information about the project and the country of venue and clarify the volunteers if they have any further questions

DURING THE PROJECT

Sending organisation will:
- keep regular contact with volunteer and receiving organization and follow and the project development
- be available to mediate communication if conflict takes place

Receiving organisation will:
- provide secure and comfortable accommodation - flat features detailed below:
  ✓ shared flat (4 international volunteers)
✓ location in the center of the town, with a beautiful landscape of the surrounding mountains
✓ ease of access to a wide range of services (pharmacy, health care center, private medical clinics, post office, bakery, supermarket, city hall, restaurants, cafes, pubs and cultural venues
✓ ease of access to public transport means (local routes and to the city of Coimbra)
✓ free wireless internet connection
✓ bike
- ensure volunteer’s transportation to Lousã on the arrival day as well as to and from the workplace(s)
- give pocket money and food allowance to the volunteer as settled in the Activity Agreement
- support volunteer’s language learning process by giving information and assistance on the Erasmus+ Online Linguistic Support and, if they wish to, support them in taking a certification exam on Portuguese as a Foreign Language
- make all the arrangements to allow volunteer’s enrollment in the On-arrival training and Mid-term training organised by the National Agency
- team up with volunteers, tutor mentor and all professionals and associated partners involved in order to solve any problems arising

UPON RETURN

Sending organisation will:
- support volunteer’s reintegration in their community and promote meetings and further relationship development with other volunteers and ex-volunteers
- ensure volunteer’s participation in the Evaluation Training organised by the National Agency (or equivalent event)
- encourage and support volunteer to share their experience and disseminate Erasmus+

Receiving organisation will:
- share project’s final results and impact
- be available for future cooperation
Ex-volunteers’ feedback:

“My time in Portugal was very good. During the project I had the possibility to try different kinds of work and to organize my own activities like language courses, etc. The work was very multifaceted and I enjoyed this.”

“I would totally recommend EVS. It’s a unique experience and you can learn a lot. As a volunteer you have the possibility to get to know a country very well, not just as a guest. Furthermore, it helps you a lot with your personal development and you can try some work different to the one at home. During this year I decided what to study after.”

(Johanna, Germany)

“My main subject was art and activities related with art. I started with several activities for children and youth and at the same time I was working in organisation for elderly, ADRAS.”

“I didn’t expect much and I was very surprised. This experience gave me many non-academical knowledges which are very useful in everyday life and communication. I also left my footprint here and I am glad I had the chance to do that. Life in a small town was also an interesting experience. Overall, I was very lucky with my hosting organisation. I want to thank them for a very nice year!”

(Kateřina, Czech Republic)

“I’m very happy with Activar, they were very kind. I enjoyed my project and loved giving english lessons to adults.”

“I got to meet so many volunteers from all over Europe and learn about their cultures, which was great. The local people were very welcoming and friendly. I plan on returning to Portugal very soon. I made some great friends.”

(Holly, France)