

Transnational Innovation Program on Homecare and Community-based Services

Bulgaria

This initiative is part of the Transnational Innovation Program within the Caring Communities project.

Help Connect Bansko

A community-based volunteering platform that links trained volunteers with elderly people and people with disabilities in remote and underserved areas.

What it is and who it serves

Help Connect Bansko is a volunteering platform designed to improve access to support services for elderly people and people with disabilities, with a particular focus on those who have limited access to digital tools. It addresses a set of overlapping challenges felt strongly in the Bansko region and similar areas: social isolation, lack of accessible information and serious barriers to assistance in remote and underserved communities.

The platform blends digital coordination tools with in-person support, connecting trained volunteers directly with the people who need help. It enables the creation of volunteer profiles, provides access to training and certification programs, and coordinates concrete services such as daily assistance, transportation and psychosocial support.

Organization details

Help Connect Bansko is being developed as a locally rooted initiative in Bulgaria, designed around the specific realities of mountainous and rural communities where formal services are often hard to reach. The initiative draws on community knowledge, volunteer networks and partnerships with local institutions to build a support model that is both practical on the ground and structured enough to scale.

Development stage

The initiative is currently at the concept development stage and has not yet progressed to implementation. Within the Transnational Innovation Program, important steps have been taken to define a structured volunteering platform that combines digital tools with community-based, face-to-face support.

Results achieved so far:

- Key challenges identified and analyzed, including limited access to digital technologies among elderly people and people with disabilities, lack of accessible information and high levels of social isolation in remote and underserved areas
- Solution concept developed, covering volunteer matching, training and certification and coordinated service delivery
- Initial implementation roadmap outlined, including platform development, pilot testing, user onboarding, and the establishment of partnerships with local institutions, NGOs and service providers

Future plans

The next step for Help Connect Bansko is to move from concept to pilot implementation through the launch of a localized platform. This phase will focus on testing the platform's core functionality, onboarding the first volunteers and beneficiaries, and validating the training modules while testing coordination mechanisms in real conditions.

In parallel, the initiative will work to establish partnerships with local authorities, NGOs, healthcare providers and community organizations, ensuring effective outreach and meaningful integration with existing support systems. Further development will include expanding the platform's functionalities, strengthening training programs and putting reliable technical support in place for both volunteers and users.

In the longer term, Help Connect Bansko is expected to grow beyond the local level, with potential expansion to national and transnational contexts. Through the Transnational Innovation Program, the platform can be positioned as a transferable and adaptable solution for community-based volunteering and support services, ready to be replicated in other regions facing similar challenges.

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