

Transnational Innovation Program on Homecare and Community-based Services

Hungary; Romania

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

Bridges

An intergenerational community program that revitalizes existing elderly care centers by increasing participation, strengthening social interaction and turning underused spaces into active community hubs.

What it is and who it serves

In many communities, the infrastructure for elderly care already exists (equipped centers, organized services and dedicated staff) but participation often remains low. At the same time, younger generations lack meaningful opportunities to engage with their communities in ways that create real social value.

Bridges is designed to connect these two gaps. It introduces intergenerational activities into existing elderly care centers, bringing young volunteers and older residents together through shared experiences, learning and everyday interaction.

Young participants support older residents through digital skills, social engagement and joint activities, while older participants contribute practical knowledge, life experiences and cultural traditions. The program is built on mutual exchange rather than one-directional support, creating stronger and more meaningful connections between generations.

A key dimension of Bridges is its transnational character. Through parallel “mirror programs” and exchange visits between Hungary and Romania, the initiative strengthens cross-border learning, motivation and community ties.

Organization details

Bridges is implemented through a partnership between municipalities in Hungary and Romania, building on already existing elderly care infrastructure in both locations.

The initiative connects local authorities, care center staff, and youth volunteers within a shared program framework. This approach allows the project to focus not on creating new services, but on activating and enhancing what already exists - increasing efficiency, participation and social impact without requiring significant new infrastructure investments.

Development stage

The initiative is in the preparation phase, building on an already established and functioning local system of elderly care centers.

Results achieved so far:

The foundation for implementation is already in place. Elderly care centers are fully operational in both municipalities, with equipped spaces, structured activities and dedicated staff providing a stable base for the program.

The initiative has focused on understanding the reasons behind low participation and designing targeted responses. Core elements of the Bridges model have been defined, including the involvement of youth volunteers, the structure of intergenerational activities and the concept of cross-border “mirror programs”.

In addition, key enabling conditions have been secured: a database of potential participants, an engaged group of young volunteers and an established partnership between the two municipalities. These elements position the initiative for a smooth and immediate transition into implementation.

Future plans

The next step is the launch of the program within existing elderly care centers in both municipalities. This includes activating youth volunteers, organizing regular intergenerational activities and establishing consistent interaction between younger and older participants.

In parallel, the initiative will introduce cross-border “mirror programs” between Hungary and Romania. Exchange visits and shared activities will serve as a mechanism for learning, motivation and strengthening cooperation between communities.

Following the initial rollout, the focus will shift to gathering feedback, refining program formats and gradually expanding participation. The long-term goal is to transform existing care centers into dynamic intergenerational spaces, ensuring sustained engagement and stronger community cohesion.

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