# PRoF Award abstract – Call 2015

# iAge – volunteer database

## 1. Research Outline

| Acronym | iAge |
|---|---|
| Project name in English | Volunteer database |
| Pitch (1 sentence) | OCMW Kortrijk (Public Center of Social Welfare) has implemented a digital volunteer database that can give an overview of potential capacity and competences of volunteers and facilitate a better matching between volunteers and vacant volunteer jobs. |
| Executive summary (max. 10 lines) | |

The focus on volunteering during the iAge project was triggered by the target to integrate people of 55 and older in volunteer jobs, activating their full economic potential in society.

The objectives of the volunteer database were:
- Better insight and matching of competences in the volunteer sector
- Methodology and tool for matching interests and competences
- Automated data transfer in the organisation on volunteers

This way, the volunteer database became a decentralized process and a dynamic document with following benefits:
- Trajectory of the volunteer can be monitored
- Searching, filtering and matching is improved (with extended selection menus)
- Easy to update
- Identifying un-used potential and attract new volunteers

## 2. Cause and context of the research

iAge was an international cooperation project focusing on the improvement of regional development in areas of decline affected by an ageing population. Partners from 10 regions in 6 countries around the North Sea all worked together on new approaches to service delivery and economic development through ICT innovation. iAge promoted the use of ICT to combat social exclusion, improve employment opportunities, quality of life and community participation. This European project was co-funded by the Interreg IVB Programme for the North Sea Region and ran from 2012 - 2014.

Until 2030 the number of people of 65+ will increase more than 50%, resulting in a significant impact on pensions, health care, the labour market and the sustainability of communities. At the same time: today's senior people are healthier, more mobile, qualified, IT- skilled and have greater purchasing power than any generation before. The North Sea Region can benefit from this potential and develop dynamic and successful communities.

Transnational activities and joint analyses lead to positive achievements towards the EU 2020 objectives for innovation and employment.

iAge objectives:

- Increase active participation and productivity of the elderly in relation to the labour market;
- Increase and promote the use and accessibility of ICT in relation to lifelong living;
- Implement transnational strategies, demonstration pilots and concrete actions to increase the economic and social e-inclusion of the ageing population
- Communicate the iAge project and its outcomes to other ageing communities in and beyond the North Sea region.

iAge activities

Developing dynamic and successful communities in times of economic and population decline is important for many regions around the North Sea. The iAge partners worked together to raise awareness, find possible solutions and, in co-operation with stakeholders, implement strategies and actions to increase the economic and social e-inclusion of the elderly. The development and implementation of the volunteer database was one of the activities in the iAge project.

## 3. Innovation results achieved

- Development and implementation of volunteer database in OCMW Kortrijk, based on an existing database by Sentiso, Germany.
- Transnational value: implementation outside OCMW Kortrijk (regional, national, international) is possible, one pilot has been tested in OCMW Harelbeke.
- Lessons learned:
    - o training of staff is required: not only on how to use the database in a technical way, but also on guidelines about flow (intake, follow-up, feedback, …).
    - o Matching between supply and demand is not an automatic process, database can only be used for qualitative approach.
    - o Competences are not preferences! There are other criteria important in volunteer jobs compared with criteria in the labour market.
- Results of database in OCMW Kortrijk:
    - o 700 volunteers in database – 613 volunteers actively involved in one or more organizations
    - o Geographic overview of where volunteers live
    - o Start- and end-dates of volunteers can be traced with a reason of stop
    - o Selection by email adresses to contact volunteers
    - o …

## 4. Link to the PRoF values

- Awareness: Awareness implies that sick, disabled or elderly people should have a good feeling about the concept or solution offered by PRoF. When people feel better, they recover faster and feel happier in their environment.

*The volunteer database makes it possible to match people's interests and competences to vacant volunteer jobs. The overall satisfaction of volunteers increases and the people who benefit from voluntary work can feel the job satisfaction of the volunteer in the work they perform and the personal contact, making them happier.*

- Comfort: Comfort describes the minimal level of comfort that patients or elderly people need. This level varies among people as different persons have another estimation of what minimal comfort means
*Because of volunteering, people can live at home longer, in the comfort of their own house. Volunteers can help them to do small chores so they do not have to leave their house and go to a retirement home. Because of the volunteer database, more volunteers can be deployed in volunteer jobs and more people can benefit from voluntary help at home.*

- Safety: It is important to bring a feeling of safety to patients and elderly people as they are in a vulnerable situation when in hospitals and other care situations.
**The engagement of volunteers out off the neigbourhood implies a feeling of safety and proximity for more vulnerable people. Every person that's involved in voluntary work and is registered in the voluntary database has a specific insurance from OCMW Kortrijk. In the volunteer database you can also paramedic data, medical condition, … For certain tasks in healthcare, only professionals are allowed, because of safety issues.**

- Privacy: Privacy is used to indicate that personal privacy and cocooning are critical. Creating a homely feeling in hospitals and other healthcare institutions is key in PRoF.
*For the intake of volunteers, there is a individual conversation between the candidate and the volunteer manager. During this conversation, people are informed about the database and how data is used. The database is only accessible by the volunteer managers from OCMW Kortrijk.*

- Loneliness: Recognizing that elderly persons are increasingly lonely in modern societies, guided PRoF to design solutions to avoid the feeling of "loneliness".
*The volunteer database is tackling loneliness in that sense, that by engaging in volunteer work, people meet other people and social isolation is no longer an issue.*

- Non-stigmatizing: Technically a product can be perfect but people may be ashamed or humiliated when they have to use it; wheelchairs and walking racks were cases in point.
*The volunteer database is non-stigmatizing, as people are selected on competences and preferences. People are valued and activated so their full potential does not get lost.*

- Intergenerational: For the PRoF 2.0 brainwave, 90% of the consortium members said they personally would want inter-generational solutions as they grew older; almost nobody wanted to live together only with other elderly people.
*Volunteering in Kortrijk stimulates intergenerational meeting between people, because both the volunteers, as the people they come into contact with, are of all ages.*

- Flexibility: Hospitals, healthcare facilities, and elderly houses should use the space in a flexible way. Stays in hospitals become shorter (most surgeries take only one day stays), and chronically ill patients are cared for in specialised care facilities.
*Volunteers can be inserted flexibaly in different volunteer jobs in health care. Also, the people benefiting from voluntary work, can live their lives more flexible because they can stay home longer.*

# 5. Applicable IPR rules

The volunteer database is developed within the Interreg IVB-project iAge, e-inclusion in ageing Europe. IPR from Interreg project products and services, that were created within Interreg and (partly) funded by Interreg, remain for 3 years the property of EU Interreg.

## 6. Information on the partners

- **OCMW Kortrijk:** the public center of social welfare in Kortrijk.
- **Crosscheck:** specializes in the development of CMS driven websites based on open source software.
- **Mentor vzw:** Mentor promotes durable employment for disadvantaged groups on the labour market.
- **Intercommunale Leiedal:** the association for regional development in South-West Flanders who help to build a dynamic, sustainable and attractive region to do business, to live and to experience.
- **Sentiso:** The sentiso GmbH operates as an innovative social service, which reactivates the experience motivated professionals in retirement. Sentiso offers an alternative approach to solving the challenges of demographic change. On the internet platform www.sentiso.de businesses and retirees are directly brought together to collaborate on a project basis.
- **Other iAge partners**: http://www.iageproject.eu/partners/

## Addendum: Contact information

OCMW Kortrijk - Evelyn Ghequiere

Evelyn.ghequiere@ocmwkortrijk.be