



“VIP PROJECT”

Erasmus KA2 about English Learning Through Cultural Heritage

PROJECT SUMMARY

Through the experience gained from the daily work of the associations, combined with participation in the DigiAdult (2022-2-RO01-KA210-ADU-000101293) and Bem-Comum (2022-1-PT01-KA210-ADU-00008483) projects, clear needs and demands from the target group have been identified. These include the need for English language learning among rural sector adults to enhance their active participation in the community, their autonomy, and their access to the digital world. Similarly, there is a pressing need to preserve and promote the cultural heritage of more vulnerable rural sectors. It is important to highlight the necessity of using alternative tools for language education to increase participant engagement, making non-formal education and cultural heritage utilization more relevant.

This project should be funded for several reasons. Firstly, adults in rural areas face a comparative disadvantage relative to urban areas in terms of access to education, services, development, and particularly programs like these. In this

sense, as indicated by the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Inclusion and Diversity Strategy (European Commission, 2021), it is essential to intervene continuously and effectively in these regions.

Furthermore, the project aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, 2015), particularly Goal 4 (Quality Education), which aims to "promote lifelong learning opportunities for all," and Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities), which seeks to "promote the social, economic, and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, or economic or other status." The project aims to improve inclusion and provide opportunities to a population segregated by their rural origin, impacting various aspects of their lives and limiting their access to broader opportunities.

Considering the aforementioned points, it is crucial to emphasize that these complexities and challenges in rural areas also have long-term effects, contributing to the depopulation of these regions as residents migrate to urban areas. This phenomenon has increasingly led to the significant loss of local cultural heritage and regional identity. Specifically, according to the 2021 Census data, the municipality of Cinfães experienced a population decrease of about 40%, from 29,757 inhabitants in 1960 to 17,730 in 2021, underscoring the scarcity of opportunities in the territory. Therefore, urgent measures are needed to ensure that the residents of these territories, especially the most vulnerable populations, have access to greater development and learning opportunities while safeguarding the local cultural heritage of these areas.

OBJECTIVES

The "VIP - Villages Inclusion through Preservation" project's main objective is to "Train adults in foreign language acquisition and the preservation and promotion of local cultural heritage."

In this way, to achieve the main objectives, follows the next specific objectives:

- Develop English language skills in adults over 40 years old.
- Strengthen the autonomy of adults over 40 years old.
- Improve access to digital platforms for adults over 40 years old.
- Expand and share knowledge about the participants' local cultural heritage.

- Exchange experiences and best practices with partner organizations at a transnational level.
- Disseminate project results at the local, regional, and European levels.

PARTNER DESCRIPTION

CASA D'ABÓBORA-ASSOCIAÇÃO JUVENIL

Casa d'Abóbora is a youth association based in Lugar de Aldeia (Cinfães, Portugal), a village with only 30 inhabitants. It was founded in 2021 with the aim to put Aldeia on the map, having two main objectives:

1. The preservation and promotion of the local cultural heritage.
2. Cultural dynamization of the municipality of Cinfães.

The target group of Casa d'Abóbora is the population of the municipality of Cinfães, with special focus on the parish of Ferreiros de Tendais. From youngsters to elders, the activities and project that the association presents tend to offer a variety of cultural activities.

Regarding the activities carried out by the association, Casa d'Abóbora has implemented four K210-ADU projects as the coordinating entity and one as a partner. These projects have addressed various themes relevant to the development of rural areas, such as the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage, digital skills training, integration of migrants, language teaching, and green entrepreneurship. Additionally, the organization actively participates in sending young people and adults for youth exchanges and training courses.

Similarly, the organization, either independently or in partnership with public and private entities, develops activities such as climate awareness, arts and culture, training, among others.

ABSENTIA APS

Absentia - Exploring the Absence is a nonprofit organization aimed at addressing the gaps left by a rapidly changing society. We focus on promoting environmental and social sustainability, community building, social inclusion, urban regeneration, and cultural heritage in Sardinia. We firmly believe in the power of project design to develop concrete initiatives and provide support to other third-

sector organizations and enterprises. We also prioritize international cooperation and European mobility, with particular emphasis on the Erasmus+ program. Our work is dedicated to the development of small rural communities and villages, primarily targeting an adult audience, as the phenomenon of depopulation is a significant concern for us. Our organization is committed to social innovation and social entrepreneurship, valuing the concept of benefit societies.

Based in Stintino, a significant part of our work focuses on revitalizing small rural communities and addressing the issue of depopulation. Leveraging the Erasmus+ platform, we promote initiatives such as *"Youth Against Plastic,"* which integrates art and creativity to advocate for sustainable practices, and *"SEASON,"* which empowers through sustainable entrepreneurship. In the field of adult education, Absentia focuses on bridging generational knowledge gaps by offering tailored programs that cater to the unique needs of mature learners. One of our key commitments is our involvement in the *"EUROPE"* project, which addresses the unique challenges faced by remote and rural areas in today's Europe, emphasizing sustainable development, digitalization, and the alarming trend of depopulation.

KENTRO ELLINIKOU POLITISMOU - IFIGENIA GEORGIADOU

The Hellenic Culture Centre (HCC), established in 1995, was one of the first non-formal education institutions to offer Greek as a second language through a summer school on an island. Its mission is to promote excellence in language teaching and learning, contributing to adult education and intercultural methodology. Intercultural awareness and cross-cultural activities are of utmost importance in all multicultural classes. Since 2000, the HCC has been a leading teacher training center, offering teacher training programs and more. It is accredited by the International Language Association (ICC) and serves as an EUROLTA teacher training center. The HCC has been recognized with the GINCO Award for quality in teacher training and a Tourism Award for its cultural tourism programs. It also organizes Creative and Cultural Tourism programs, hosting multinational class groups in Santorini with a focus on creativity.

All training programs are carefully designed based on the principles of inclusive and participatory adult education. The Language and Culture courses raise intercultural awareness and empower individuals to learn and exchange

experiences in an inspiring and empowering learning environment. In-person courses foster creative communication with locals. HCC programs create a safe space for interaction, emphasizing the local reality (society, history, culture, economy, etc.) and building bridges to the students' contexts, with sensitivity to diversity.

On an island like Santorini, where locals often work intensively and may overlook updating their knowledge about their own Cultural Heritage and Local History, this project comes at the right time to help the HCC remind them that it is possible to acquire new knowledge, which is so necessary on an island full of tourism.