



**The project «Moving Forward in Europe with Volunteering - MOVEfwd»
was funded with the support of the European Union under the
Programme "Europe for Citizens"**

**Applicable to the Strand 2 – Measure 2.2 "Networks of Towns"
Measure 2.3 "Civil Society Projects"
Strand 1 – "European Rememberance"**

Preparatory activities: The activities involved 30 participants (16 participants from the City of Varaždin, Croatia; 6 from Sremska Mitrovica, Serbia; 2 from Rome, Italy; 4 from Ptuj, Slovenia; and 2 from Plovdiv, Bulgaria).

Location / Dates: Varaždin, Croatia (April 7th – April 8th, 2021)

*The first day was organized as a hybrid event (the Croatian participants were gathered at POU Varaždin's premises and others were connected via teleconferencing), and the second day was an online meeting. Zoom was used as the main platform.

Short description: These activities consisted of: 1) Day 1 - an opening conference including presentations by the partners and guest speakers and gathering participant inputs; 2) Day 2 - Technical/kick-off meeting in order overview the grant agreement and plan the events.

Day 1 (Wednesday April 7th) began with a local press conference held at the premises of POU Varaždin. Representatives from POU Varaždin (lead partner) and the Red Cross Society of Varaždin County (project partner) described the importance of the project to the partnership and how it intends to enhance citizen involvement in volunteer-based actions in Europe. After this, POU Varaždin started the opening presentation where participants from Croatia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Serbia and Italy were connected remotely via Zoom. After POU Varaždin director Lana Velimirović Vukalović presented the details of the project, the partners from outside Croatia (RRA Srem & TO SM from Serbia; Ljudska Univerza Ptuj, Slovenia; PROGEU from Italy; and Institute for Sustainable Development and Education presented in Bulgaria) presented their activities and efforts relating to volunteering in the pandemic. The Youth Council of Sremska Mitrovica, Serbia presented on how they are coordinating efforts relating to COVID-19 vaccinations. The Institute for Sustainable Development and Education presented on the methods they use to train volunteers. Rotaract Ptuj presented on the activities that they are performing to engage youth in community actions. PROGEU presented its various programmes and measures to encourage volunteering.

After this, two specific examples from Varazdin were presented: 1) The Red Cross Society of Varazdin County's response to the earthquake in Petrinja in December 2020 – How volunteers contributed to disaster relief – Presented by Nebojša Buđanovac, Director of the Red Cross Society of Varazdin County; 2) The activities of FOI – Faculty of Informatics and Organization of the University of Zagreb, located in Varazdin, regarding the ways in which the Centre for Volunteering and Humanitarian work has engaged students to volunteer during the COVID-19 pandemic – presented by prof.dr.sc. Violeta Vidaček Hainš. At the end of the first day, online interactive surveys were used to engage the audience and gain their feedback on what volunteering means to them and how they see the EU playing a role in promoting civil society. By introducing the project approach and themes covered in the project in this manner, participants became familiar with the different ways in which volunteering has been sustained and promoted in Europe during the pandemic and were able to gain best practices in volunteering.

Day 2 (Thursday April 8th) was organized as a meeting between representatives of the partnership. Partner representatives from Croatia were gathered at POU Varaždin's main office in Varazdin. The partners were connected via Zoom. At the meeting, the representatives of each partner organization reviewed the feedback received from participants during the previous day, discussed the organization of events and responsibilities, clarified questions regarding participants and finance, and determined the way in which the project will continue despite there being the COVID-19 pandemic.

Events:

In addition to the preparatory activities, **five (5) events** have been carried out within this project. The following describes the aims, contents and outcomes per event in chronological order:

Event 1

Participation: The event involved 89 citizens, including 17 participants from the City of Varaždin, (Croatia), 17 from Sremska Mitrovica (Serbia), 9 from Plovdiv and Sofia (Bulgaria), 13 from Ptuj (Slovenia) and 33 from Italy (Rome and other cities in Italy)

Location / Dates: The event took place in Rome, Italy from 06/05/2021 to 08/05/2021 *Due to the travel and health & safety restrictions in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic the event was held online.

Short description: The event focused on issues that have affected youth during the pandemic and aimed to raise awareness on the benefits of the EU agenda for younger persons.

06/05/2021 (Day 1) began with a short presentation on the project "Movefwd", and a description of the SOS ETS project, which has aimed to raise the capacities/abilities of civil society organizations (CSOs) to launch inclusive actions in Italy. After the presentation of the SOS ETS project, participants were divided into zoom rooms so they could take part in a group activity, namely the definition and use of the SOS ETS approach based on different scenarios. Participants were asked to identify a critical issue in their region, address it using SOS methods, and devise activities suitable to solve the problem and guarantee sustainability. Participants presented their work and a roundtable was opened in order to debate the risks and feasibility of the different proposals. By presenting the SOS project and having participants take part in scenarios based on the action, participants understood how they can support entities & become active citizens in starting-up their actions. At the end of the activity, participants were asked to answer an online questionnaire so they could express their degree of satisfaction and views toward volunteering.

07/05/2021 (Day 2) was dedicated analyzing the challenges that youth face in terms of education, employment and volunteering. The first presentation was held by Giovanni Telesca, President of the *Erasmus Student Network Italia*, the Italian section of the Erasmus Student Network. It is the main volunteering organization dealing with student mobility in Europe. It operates in 42 countries with more than 520 sections, and its work impacts +15.000 volunteers that operate at the local, national and international level. Telesca presented the main goals of the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, which aims at supporting social and civic engagement and ensuring that all young people have the necessary resources to take part in local actions. After briefly presenting the 11 EU Youth Goals, Telesca presented the different opportunities proposed by the European Commission to engage and involve the youth.

The 2nd presentation was held by Chiara Mariotto and Ilaria Garampi, representatives of *Fondazione Antonio Megalizzi*: a foundation which aims to enhance the culture of legality, respect for the person, civil coexistence, rejection of all forms of violence and the principles of cooperation, solidarity and subsidiarity. The Foundation strives to increase the availability of information in order to strengthen a collective national and European identity. Through a group discussion, they addressed myths and facts on the role of the EU. After that, Sofia Silva Fonseca gave the floor to Tommaso Canetta, vice president of *Pagella Politica*, a member of the *European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO)*. He talked about fact-checking and fighting disinformation with regard to the role of Europe, in particular the false reports/news about the European Union's intervention in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic.

The first part of the morning was closed with a panel discussion, dealing with the new education gaps facing youth due to COVID-19. The panel included representatives of PROGEU (Italy), *Pučko Otvoreno Učilište Varaždin* (Croatia), *Ljudska Univerza Ptuj* (Slovenia) and *Institute for Sustainable Business Development and Education* (Bulgaria). The lecturers presented on the situation in each country and the consequences that the COVID-19 has had on education and on psychological health of young learners. The panel followed up with a discussion on the challenges and solutions per region.

In the afternoon, the session continued with testimonies/discussion with volunteers and youth organizations. They presented their activities and explained how COVID affected them. Irene Agostino, president of *Associazioni Fiori Gioiosi*, an Italian organization set up in 2019 aiming to promote an inclusive mentality. Ms. Agostino presented her organization's activities and explained how she has adjusted operations due to the COVID restrictions. Gennaro Giudetti, a humanitarian worker of *Médecins Sans Frontières* presented his direct experience in providing support in combating Covid during the first phase of the pandemic. Renzo Razzano, member of the Board of the *Centro Servizi per il volontariato della Regione Lazio (CSV Lazio)*, an association that is organizing, managing and providing technical, training and information support services to promote and strengthen the presence and role of volunteers within the society, presented the CSV Lazio publication "*Quale intervento pubblico dopo la pandemia: il ruolo dei volontari e del terzo settore*" (*What about public intervention after the pandemic: the role of volunteers and the third sector*). The presentation focused on the lack of public sector intervention in supporting the activities of volunteers. He analyzed social organizations, as well as the various strategies necessary for making public-private partnerships a strategic asset for the continuation of activities during the pandemic.

08/05/2021 (Day 3) was dedicated to meeting up with European decision and policy makers. After a questionnaire was conducted to test knowledge and collect opinions about the 11 EU Youth Goals and new Agenda 2021-2027, Sofia Silva Fonseca gave the floor to Vito Borrelli, the Deputy Director of the Italian Representation of the European Commission and Mr. Brando Benifei, member of the European Parliament. They presented the activities implemented by both the Institutions and the activities foreseen by the end of the year. Their speech allowed participants to understand the strategic interventions of EU institutions, and about what they will achieve in the field of youth. After their presentation, Ms. Virginia Volpi, author of "*Cos'è per te l'Europa?*" (*What is Europe for you?*) presented on how youth can contribute to defining the EU Youth Agenda and the future of Europe.

Event 2 (Main opening event hosted by the lead partner POU Varaždin)

Participation: The event involved 85 citizens, including 41 participants (26 in-situ and 15 online) from the city of Varaždin (Croatia), 8 (in-situ) from Sremska Mitrovica (Serbia), 9 (online) from the Plovdiv & Sofia (Bulgaria), 12 from Italy (Rome and other surrounding regions – 8 online and 4 in-situ); and 15 (8 in-situ and 7 online) from Ptuj (Slovenia)

Location / Dates: Varaždin, Croatia (June 28th – June 30th, 2021) *Each day was organized as a hybrid event. Zoom was used as the main platform to connect online participants with those participating in-person.

Short description: The aim of the event was to show how education for young volunteers during COVID-19 was adjusted and improved during the pandemic. The other aim was to build citizens' understanding on the importance of solidarity in the times of COVID-19. The activities consisted of: 1) Day 1 - an opening conference including presentations by the partners and guest speakers, a panel discussion, and gathering participant inputs; 2) Day 2 – Presentations of best practices in training and promoting volunteering and a workshop focusing on the impact of online learning on volunteer initiatives; 3) Day 3 – presentations and discussions about the Red Cross Society of Varaždin County's approach to training volunteers and intervening in crisis situations (based on COVID-19 experience).

Day 1 (Monday June 28th) began with an introduction of the project concept to the participants by Lana Velimirović Vukalović (Director of POU Varaždin) and Zdravka Grđan, President of the Varaždin City Council. After this, best practice examples in volunteering in Varaždin were presented. Jasmina Dvorski, Principal of the IV. Primary school

of Varazdin presented about the approach that has been taken during the COVID-19 pandemic to teach pupils about volunteering and she emphasized how it creates solidarity and a feeling of belonging in the community. Laura Fel, a nursing student at University North Varazdin, described how nursing students were trained while also upholding the strict safety measures during the pandemic. Apart from the examples in Varazdin, regional examples about how to conduct training during the pandemic were presented. Juliette Delescluse, General Coordinator of the Doctors of the World Croatian field office, described how the partnership of the EU project "PRO HEALTH for ROMA" was able to conduct workshops with Roma persons during the summer of 2020 in Medimurje County and Sremska Mitrovica. Kostadinka Todorova, Director of the International Initiatives for Cooperation in Razlog, Bulgaria, described how the NGO's previous fundraising actions were adjusted so they could reach various citizens and encourage them to take action in their community during the pandemic. To end the first day, a panel discussion was organized which included David Rihartič, from Rotary Interact Ptuj, Slovenia, Nebojša Buđanovac, Director of the Red Cross Society of Varazdin County, Nino Preložnjak, Director of P4 - Center for Youth and Independent Culture, Prof. Dr. Nako Stefanov from the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", and Ljiljana Ilić from the Youth Council of Sremska Mitrovica. At the panel, the various guests shared their approaches and exchanged know-how on how they have organized training, events and volunteering during the pandemic. At the end, an online interactive survey was organized to gather opinions about online training tools and access the outcomes of the activities on Day 1.

Day 2 (Tuesday June 29th) began with a tour of Varazdin for the international participants. In this way, they became more acquainted with the city, its culture, and history, and it made them more welcomed to the city. After that, best practice presentations in volunteering were held in the main conference hall of POU Varazdin. Rotary Interact 1181, represented by Leonarda Novoselec and Marko Daraboš, presented on how the organization was able to adjust their approach to volunteering and coordinate actions during the pandemic. Development Agency North (DAN), represented by Marin Šipek, presented on how the agency has used various EU funding sources to coordinate actions that build the capacities of volunteers. Representatives from the NGO "Kings of the street" in Maribor, Slovenia presented their approach to assisting homeless persons during the pandemic. The workshop organized by POU Varazdin was designed as an analysis of a SWOT analysis. Participants were divided into 2 groups and they discussed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with online learning.

Day 3 (Wednesday June 30th) began with an overview of the findings from the previous day and an interactive quiz about volunteering. After this, Nebojša Buđanovac, Director of the Red Cross Society of Varazdin County, presented on the Red Cross Society of Varazdin County's approach to training its volunteers and intervening in crisis situations. Buđanovac emphasized that there is a growing need for mental health support for citizens in European countries. At the end of the main presentation, a group discussion took place where the participants described how they felt during the pandemic, what they think should be done to improve the mental health status of citizens and what actions can be organized over the long-term to address the growing mental health problems faced by citizens.

Event 3

Participation: The event involved 95 citizens, including 11 participants (10 in-situ & 1 online) from the city of Varaždin (Croatia), 47 participants (42 in-situ and 5 online) from Sremska Mitrovica (Serbia), 12 participants (4 in-situ and 8 online) from Plovdiv and Sofia (Bulgaria); 15 participants (3 in-situ and 12 online) from Ptuj (Slovenia); and 10 online participants from Italy (Rome and surrounding regions)

Location/Dates: The event took place in Sremska Mitrovica, Serbia, from 25/08/2021 to 27/08/2021

Short description: The aim of the event was to present how volunteers are playing a crucial role in ensuring that persons with disabilities and elderly persons continue to have access to essential services. The event was also prepared to show citizens how solidarity and volunteer work contributed to new innovations and civil protection in Srem. The event in Sremska Mitrovica was organized as a hybrid event, with participants present in situ (from Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia and Bulgaria) and participants present online (from Serbia, Croatia, Bulgaria, Slovenia and Italy). The application used for the online part of the event was Zoom.

Wednesday, 25/08/2021 (Day 1) was dedicated to showing how volunteers are playing a crucial role in ensuring that persons with disabilities and elderly persons continue to have access to essential services. The participants included representatives of NGOs working mostly with vulnerable groups; public sector organizations, Red Cross representatives, as well as representatives of the local self-governments, regional development agencies and citizens. Two organizations, the Red Cross of Sremska Mitrovica and the School for Special Education and Upbringing Milan Petrović from Novi Sad, illustrated the work of their volunteers and their dedication in helping out the most vulnerable members of the society by presenting on difficulties they met during the COVID-19 pandemic and discussing their solutions to problems in the field. Volunteers from the Red Cross of Sremska Mitrovica, Anja Jovanović and Stefan Janošević, talked about the impact of COVID-19 on the most vulnerable groups and the contribution of young volunteers in emergency crisis situations. Svetlana Matic, from Milan Petrović school, talked about how volunteers from the Volunteers' Centre contributed to the work of teachers directly involved in working with persons with disabilities. By organizing these presentations, participants gained know-how on to make education accessible to all persons (esp. those with disabilities) during the pandemic and learned how volunteers make a difference in community actions.

Thursday, 26/08/2021 (Day 2) started with a press conference in order to make the project visible to the general public. The partnership presented examples of intergenerational solidarity, and described how out-of-the-box thinking is resulting in innovative solutions to issues relating to social inclusion. Bojana Lanc, project manager from the Regional Development Agency Srem, presented a best practice example that addresses the needs of PwDs (persons with disabilities) during COVID19: a project funded by Europe for Citizens programme: Web Accessibility and Other Initiatives for Persons with Disabilities in EU during Pandemic and other Crisis Times. The rest of the online session was led by Bojana Lanc and the purpose of it was to brainstorm on new project ideas that could be developed within the framework of Europe for Citizens and similar programmes, covering the whole partnership.

The afternoon programme was organized in-situ, at the Sremska Mitrovica beach. Red Cross Volunteers prepared a mock-up rescue action which included the use of specialized boats for persons with disabilities and trained personnel for piloting them in an emergency situation related to floods. These specialized vehicles were obtained as part of the project "Boards without Borders" which was financed by the EU after the 2014 floods on the Sava River.

Friday, 27/08/2021 (Day 3): on the final day, the participants were introduced to the work of Centre for Economic Empowerment of Roma people and its Chairwomen, Slađana Teodorović held a presentation on the field work performed during the COVID-19 pandemic in Roma settlements, the work of volunteers in this respect and described the difficulties Roma persons have been facing during the pandemic. In the same presentation, Teodorović presented an innovative solution mask for the deaf and muted. This is an illustration of how citizens (via innovation) can contribute to social inclusion during the pandemic. With the same purpose, Bojana Lanc from the Regional Development Agency Srem presented the work of the Regional Innovation Centre from Start-ups Stara Pazova. She described how it contributed to the development of protective masks with changeable filters. These are being used in the local community as innovative solutions in healthcare and they contribute to inclusion.

Event 4

Participation: The event involved 65 citizens, including 10 participants from the city of Varaždin (Croatia), 10 participants from Sremska Mitrovica (Serbia), 4 participants from Plovdiv and Sofia (Bulgaria); 35 participants from Ptuj (Slovenia); and 6 participants from Italy (Rome and surrounding regions)

Location / Dates: The event took place in Ptuj, Slovenia from 11/04/2022 to 13/04/2022

Short description: The aim of the event was to show how intergenerational solidarity functions in practice, and emphasize how it functions as a EU value. The event also focused on engaging citizens from different generations in democratic processes, and gathering opinions of youth on the Europe that they want in the future. During this period, the COVID-19 travel restrictions had been lifted and the entire event was held in-situ. The following provides a breakdown on the contents and outcomes per day:

Monday, 11/04/2022 (Day 1): Overall, the first day focused on the exchange of best practices and experiences relating to volunteering in the times of COVID-19. Ljudska Univerza Ptuj (LUP – the host) presented their organisation and activities; with special emphasis on the Centre for Multigenerational Activities, and how volunteering with seniors has been conducted during the pandemic. Following that, youth humanitarian organizations presented their work, i.e. what they do in the local environment, and what is their impact on the local community. Rotaract Club Ptuj was presented by president of the club, Nika Jošt. She presented their activities and pointed out some of the barriers the club and its members have faced in the times of COVID-19. Due to the COVID-19 measures, they were unable to organise many events in 2020 and 2021 (Carnival celebration, Waste picking, Movie night in cinema with a commentary, Easter workshops, etc.). In any case, volunteers in Rotary were able to adjust by using online tools and organizing events (such as the such as Chestnut picnic by Ptuj lake) in a safer outdoor setting. Leo Club Ptuj presented their work as a volunteer-based youth organization. Leo Club Ptuj was presented by their president Iva Terbuc. Leo Club Ptuj is one of the oldest youth humanitarian organisations in the region. Terbuc also presented their activities, such as Leofest, Chestnut picnic, Wine is not water, Fewer candles for fewer graves, Christmas Gift Giving, and Easter treasure hunt. All activities are oriented towards making the local community a better place for all generations. After the presentation, groups work was conducted and discussions were started based on the findings per group. Through these activities, participants learned about LUP and their programs. They learned about the Centre for multigenerational solidarity, and gained first-hand experience about how youth volunteer via the presentations by Rotaract club Ptuj and Leo club Ptuj, and via group work.

Tuesday, 12/04/2022 (Day 2): The second day started with the press conference. Several regional journalists came to the event, and took statements from the partners. The press conference was then followed by a presentation on Social activation in the times of COVID-19, by Tanja Božič and Silvo Zapečnik; coordinators of the Social activation program that is run by Ljudska univerza Ptuj and Center ponovne uporabe Ormož; financed by the Ministry of Labor, Family, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities of the Republic of Slovenia. The aim of the program is to help long-term unemployed and long-term recipients of social support to (re)actively integrate into society (via volunteering), and if possible, also into employment. It was emphasized that as a result of the project, they become more motivated to make life changes and improve their psychosocial health. The project increases their access to the labour market, and develops the social competences of involved target groups; thus, raising their competencies to actively solve social problems and boosting their motivation and empowerment to enter the labour market. After the presentation, a thorough discussion on intergenerational solidarity was implemented. Three groups were formed to discuss

intergenerational solidarity from different angles. The first group was called “Youth for seniors” and they had to simulate a situation in which they were a humanitarian organisation and they had to organise event for seniors, they had to take into the account characteristics of seniors. The second group had a task to put them into the role of a senior club or association and they had to organise an event for their senior peers. The third group was an adult education organisation and they had to form a training program for seniors. The aim of this group work was to stimulate participants to think from a different angle on the intergenerational solidarity and also on the target groups (seniors), which is a very diverse target group. From the group work, three new project ideas targeting senior citizens via education were created. After the group work, a discussion on the topic of intergenerational solidarity was moderated by hosts in order to see how these ideas could be further developed. In the afternoon, participants visited Špajza modrosti and Obešalnik. Špajza modrosti is an intergenerational and family centre for families. Janja Kafel, coordinator of Špajza modrosti, guided participants through their premises and explained the activities they organize daily. Participants had the opportunity to witness an Easter workshop for children. After a short tour around Špajza modrosti, participants listened to the presentation of the coordinator of Špajza modrosti. A short “mind-workout” at the end of the presentation showed how teachers/coordinators can effectively engage senior citizens and others during online learning. To end the day, there was a guided tour of Ptuj. The tour included a visit to the chocolate factory and ascent to the castle which showed participants cultural assets of the town.

Wednesday 13/04/2022 (Day 3): The third day started with a presentation on the programs for seniors which are implemented in Ljudska univerza Ptuj. Petja Janežkovič, coordinator of those programs, presented them with emphasis on one of the latest programs developed and established called “Slow Learning”. Janžekovič noted that training seniors requires andragogical-trained practitioners who know the theory and practice of adult education, and have a thorough understanding that older people are an extremely diverse group of learners with very different needs. This means that tailored approaches and ways of working in educational programs are always required. It was mentioned that the main problem is that most IT teachers do not have the necessary skills and competencies to educate older people. Therefore, LUP designed a program (for IT teachers) with a consortium of partners who are experts in that field of learning. They presented best practices from the program, and also their experiences. After the presentation, participants were eager to learn more about the project and mentioned that they are searching for similar programs/methods in their countries. After the program, LUP gathered obtained information from participants on what Europe means to them. Participants and partners that attended the meeting in Ptuj together outlined guidelines for further projects and upcoming work.

Event 5

Participation: The event involved 73 citizens, including 11 participants from the city of Varaždin (Croatia), 8 participants from Sremska Mitrovica (Serbia), 40 participants from Plovdiv and Sofia (Bulgaria); 4 participants from Ptuj (Slovenia); and 10 participants from Italy (Rome and surrounding regions)

Location / Dates: The event took place in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, from 07/06/2022 to 09/06/2022 (in-situ)

Short description: The aim of the event was to present educational initiatives and best practices connected to volunteers and show how their roles have changed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants learned how to converted learning goals into outcomes via “Design Thinking” in the times of COVID-19 and were able to discuss/debate about the necessary future skills and digital skills volunteers need.

Tuesday, 7/6/2022 (Day 1) started with the welcoming of the participants to Plovdiv and to the event. The welcoming speeches were held by the director of the Institute for Sustainable Business Development and Education, and a member of the leading partner organization POU Varaždin. The welcome speeches were followed by a presentation about the host organization - the Institute for Sustainable Business Development; presented by Elena Markova. The presentation highlighted the mission, perspectives and core values of the organization.

Immediately after the presentation, Dimitar Panchev, PhD in Sociology from “Paisii Hilendarski” University of Plovdiv, presented his project called “Mobile School in Stolipinovo”. In the period 2018-2020, he was part of this project for informal education. The focus of the project was to organize educational initiatives through art, science and play/games with children between 6 and 16 in the Stolipinovo district, an impoverished region of Plovdiv with a large Roma population. Panchev gave a thorough introduction and presented the aim of the activities, i.e to give children experience and communication skills that can be outside their immediate community; build self-confidence and cultural and social capital that helps them overcome barriers to exclusion in the future. He also pointed out that the school needed to be adapted to the children’s needs and to the conditions they live in to reach all of them. The findings of Panchev’s team show that many children would not have had access to education if it were not for the project, as schools and access to schools is limited in Stolipinovo. Panchev’s team wanted to give excluded children the chance to participate and access education. It was emphasized that the pandemic had a severe impact on education. As a result of teamwork and out-of-the-box thinking, the idea of creating a mobile educational module was born – an art bus that will “deliver” creative educational workshops around the neighborhood. Panchev clarified that schools are an important stop on the route of the mobile format, and he also pointed out that the involvement of locals is crucial to integrating the priorities and needs of the community. He also believes that this is crucial for passing on the team’s experience and knowledge to future trainers from the community.

Dimitar's presentation was followed by a brief discussion about how roles have changed due to COVID-19, where participants were able to express their impressions and opinions about how education in general has been altered due to the pandemic.

On **Wednesday, 8/6/2022 (Day 2)**, the focus was on volunteering during crisis situations and natural hazards. The day started off with a presentation by the "Uz tebe sam" (I'm with you) association, represented by Dijana Petek, Vice President. The topic of the presentation was "Volunteering in crisis situations". Petek highlighted the activities of the association, namely projects aimed at raising the quality of life of young people with disabilities, children with disabilities and their families. Therefore, they provided personal assistance to young people with the most severe disabilities; organized workshops for young people with disabilities, a playroom for children with disabilities, lectures on education and held counseling for parents of children with disabilities in development. They also held lectures for the general population of children in primary schools with the aim of preventing violence, especially the prevention of violence against children with disabilities. Petek's team is actively committed to improving the quality of life and is focused on removing barriers and attitudes that lead to discrimination and the social exclusion of people with disabilities, children with disabilities, and their families. Notably, all the activities they carry out include the work of volunteers (50 annually, on average), for whom they organize various training.

After that, Krasimira Bakardzhieva, Member of the Board of Directors at the Institute for Sustainable Business Development and Education doing a PhD Study of Psychology at the Department of "Social Organization, Clinical and Educational Psychology" within the Faculty of Philosophy at Sofia University, provided a brief overview of programmes and best practices where EU values and support led to volunteer-based actions. Bakardzhieva introduced a model called "Design Thinking" and explained how it works in practice. To conclude her presentation, Krasimira initiated and moderated a group discussion where participants converted learning goals into outcomes via "Design Thinking" in the times of COVID-19. The participants were divided into two groups and discussed the necessary skills volunteers need, especially during the pandemic. The first group's findings were oriented towards communication issues between volunteers and elderly people, as well as the lack of motivation volunteers often experience. The second group introduced a more non-traditional approach and came up with a scenario where a meteor is approaching Earth and all electronic devices are shut down. By applying "design thinking" to the scenarios, each group was able to understand the concept, as well as discuss ideas, share experiences and determine the best approaches to solving local issues.

Immediately after that, Professor Nako Stefanov, Doctor of Philosophy with a PhD in History, presented on "Volunteering in Rescue Activities Concerning Fire and Natural Hazards in times of COVID-19". His presentation concerned volunteering in rescue activities at the local level during the lockdown period during the COVID-19 pandemic. The disaster risks covered in his presentation were forest fires, floods and landslides. Prof. Stefanov described that a series of fires had occurred near Rhodope mountain in a small town in 2020. Later on, the same area suffered from heavy rains that initiated floods and slides. All these unfortunate events motivated many volunteers from nearby, as well as persons from further away. He pointed out that the insiders' motivation was natural because they had to defend their own families and houses, but the outsiders' motivation was born by pure humanitarian impetus. Prof. Stefanov also pointed out that there was a third input in the rescue activities – the support by state and local authorities especially when heavy equipment was necessary. He highlighted the importance of organizational activity, which served as the main point of the presentation, which was crucial not only for the rescue activity but also for addressing the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuring volunteers were deployed properly. By presenting volunteering in this manner, participants became aware of the motivations among volunteers and why it is important to establish an overarching organizational structure that can manage their work, effort and good intentions in the best manner.

Thursday, 9/6/2022 (Day 3) began with a summary of project results and outcomes, and a group work activity. The participants were divided into four groups and had to discuss issues such as the way attitudes toward volunteering have changed during the pandemic, the lessons learnt thanks to the pandemic and what support would be needed and appreciated from the EU. Each group contributed to the discussion with insightful suggestions. Participants mentioned that actions that focus on the harmonization of policies across European countries, better distribution of fiscal resources between countries, and even the use of humor as a tool for overcoming stressful situations (e.g. Croatian Mountain Rescue Service) contribute to enhancing volunteer-based efforts. To end the first part, representatives of the media took statements from participants and interviewed partner representatives.

The group discussion was followed by a presentation on "Digital Skills and How to Present Us Better Online" by Justine Toms PhD, a digital marketing expert. Justine provided an overview of the main digital channels, attractive ways to present activities online, how to make better content, and how to reach more people through social media. Justine Toms introduced participants to digital tools that organizations could use to raise awareness about their activities and campaigns. Her explanations were supported by real-life examples from Bulgarian and international companies & organizations. She showed how they use these tools to promote themselves and attract volunteers. Last but not least, Justine Toms gave some important pieces of advice to young volunteers and participants in the project about how to stay motivated, and how to take advantage of social media.