



## Belfast City Council

**Report to:** Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

**Subject:** **EU ~~funded~~ Funded Senior Volunteering Programme - GIVE**

**Date:** 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2009

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### Relevant Background Information.

One of the Council's current priorities is improving services to older people. To ensure that this priority is given due regard across all Council services, an All Party Reference Group on Older People was set up a number of years ago, reporting to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. A cross-departmental officer group has also developed an action plan for improving these services and as part of this action plan an opportunity was identified for involving older people in a European volunteering exchange initiative.

The "GIVE" (Grundtvig Initiative on Volunteering in Europe for Seniors) is a ~~new~~ European initiative which was implemented at the start of introduced in 2009. It consists of a scheme of grants to support ~~Senior senior~~ Volunteering volunteering Projects projects between local organisations located in two countries participating in the European Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP).

The Lifelong Learning Programme ~~aims to offer various kinds of~~ offers educational opportunities to people of all ages, ~~in order to facilitate formal, non-formal and~~ informal learning. Volunteering is increasingly recognised in Europe as a very valuable ~~informal~~ learning experience, for people of all ages but in particular. In particular, Volunteering it has been recognised as a way of offering new learning opportunities to for senior citizens older people in Europe as it can including, promoting promote the process of active ageing and emphasising the contribution of seniors to ~~our~~ societies.

This ~~Action project therefore~~ offers a new ~~form of mobility to~~ European opportunity for senior citizens older people and will allow them to learn, ~~to~~ share knowledge and experience - and to "give" - in a European Member State other than their own.

~~The~~ is initiative is a new form of co-operation within the Grundtvig Programme, fostering collaboration between the organisations; sending and hosting volunteers. It allows organisations ~~to which~~ join the programme, ~~to~~ enrich their work, through the

exchange of good practice, and create sustainable European collaboration between them.

The Programme has a number of objectives:

1. To enable senior citizens to volunteer in another European country for any kind of non-profit activity, as a form of informal (and mutual) learning activity. ~~(learning / sharing knowledge).~~
2. To create lasting cooperation between the host and sending organisations around a specific topic or target group, ~~and thanks to the exchange of volunteers.~~
3. To enable the local communities involved in the exchange of volunteers to draw on the potential of senior citizens as a source of knowledge, competence and experience.

Anticipated outputs ~~can be viewed in terms of those for the participant and those for the organisations involved:~~ are as follows:

**For the volunteers:**

1. ~~I~~increase of personal, linguistic, social and intercultural skills and competences.
2. ~~C~~ontribution to the development and implementation of non-profit activities, ~~and beyond this, contribute~~ to the community as an active citizen.
3. ~~A~~acquisition / development / transmission of specific task-related skills. ~~(the learning and competence development outcomes of the mobility period for the volunteers will be given appropriate recognition by the participating organisations, i.e. validation of informal learning).~~

**For the sending and hosting organisations and the local communities in which the volunteers spend their mobility period abroad:**

4. ~~E~~xchange and mutual acquisition of experience, knowledge and good practice.
5. ~~D~~evelopment of European collaboration around a particular theme,
6. ~~I~~ntensified European outlook.

~~With regard to T~~he partnership, ~~it~~ must be between 2 organisations from 2 different Member States. Each organisation will be expected to send between 2-6 volunteers and to host 2-6 volunteers during the project period. ~~2 volunteers are regarded as an absolute minimum.~~ Volunteers may ~~travel and volunteer~~ move in a group or individually. Sending and hosting may take place at the same time but does not necessarily have to do so.

In terms of volunteer profiles, the action is open to all adult citizens **aged 50** or

above. Particular emphasis will be given to encouraging the participation of volunteers from socially disadvantaged groups and ethnic minorities, thereby helping to strengthen their integration in Europe and to combat racism and xenophobia. Equal participation of both genders is also encouraged.

Volunteer placements are carried out in one continuous period of 3-8 weeks, not including the necessary preparation and debriefing phases.

~~3 weeks are an absolute minimum.~~

### Key Issues.

In August 2009, the European Unit sent out a call to other European cities asking for a show of interest should they wish to ~~be a partner~~partner Belfast in this exchange. Various cities made contact; however the most suitable in terms of volunteering opportunities and best practice was Madrid.

Fundacion Voluntarios por Madrid, (Madrid for Volunteers Foundation), is a non-profit entity for ~~the~~ promotion, training and advice in the field of volunteerism. It was set up in 2005 by Madrid City Council. The Foundation is chaired by the Mayor of Madrid and has Elected Members on the Board; the overall responsibility rests with the Director for Volunteering.

The strategic objectives of the Foundation are ~~as follows~~to:

1. Promote citizen participation in the voluntary sector.
2. Encourage participation of private organisations wishing to exercise Corporate Social Responsibility.
3. ~~To~~involve and support the development of social organisations.
4. ~~To~~offer a quality public service to facilitate the implementation of projects promoting voluntary action.

Fundacion Voluntarios por Madrid can offer a wide range of volunteering opportunities under the GIVE programme; such as working in community centres, youth training and ~~intergenerational training~~to mention a few.

The Grundtvig programme offers a preparatory grant for interested organisations. This grant is to allow the organisations to ~~partake in an exchange~~participate in a 2 day exchange for two days to review their working relationship and volunteer opportunities should they embark on the programme in 2010. The deadline for the application for preparatory visits ~~is~~ 11 December 2009 and so the.

The European Unit has submitted a preparatory application form to be able to undertake an exchange visit in on 21-22 January 2010. Officers from Madrid envisage visiting Belfast from 28-29 January 2010. [A draft agenda for the preparatory meeting is attached as an appendix.](#)

[Pending the success of the exchange,](#) the final application form is to be submitted at the end of March 2010. The project, if selected, will then begin in August 2010 for a period of approximately 2 years.

### **Resource Implications.**

#### Financial.

The Council would be eligible for a grant to cover [the the full](#) costs associated with hosting and sending volunteers, as well as the volunteer grant during their stay. [The preparatory grant would also cover the costs of the initial visit. This means that the programme is 100% funded by the European Union. There would be no additional costs to the Council.](#)

#### [In terms of the volunteering element, the grant breakdown is as follows:](#)

Sending; 800euro per volunteer to cover the organisations preparatory costs, cultural, linguistic and personal preparation of the volunteer and costs to cover the follow up of their experiences on return. Travel costs can be recouped as long as the duration of the stay is up to 12 weeks.

Hosting; As host organisation, [the](#) Council can access up to 390euro per volunteer received as well as a sum per volunteer to cover lodging, insurance, local travel and support to incoming volunteers. The exact amount for this is dependent upon the length of stay.

Volunteer grant: this depends on the length of the stay; it starts at approximately 1500 euro and increases on a weekly basis.

#### [The programme is 100% funded by the European Union.](#)

80% of the grant is received once the project is agreed, with the remaining 20% to be received once the final report has been submitted.

#### Human Resources.

The project lead [\(an officer from the Environmental Health Service who supports the Council's work on older people\)](#) would be expected to provide direction for the volunteers in terms of accommodation, ensuring they undergo the Council induction process and child protection training (where necessary) as well as complete the

relevant reports and manage mentors aligned to the project. [This can be managed within exiting resources.](#)

Asset and Other Implications.

N/A

**Recommendations.**

The Committee is requested to ~~note the implications to the Council of~~ [agree to the submitting submission of a full](#) application to the Grundtvig Seniors Programme.

The Committee is also requested to authorise the Chair (or nominee) of the [All Party Reference Group on Older People](#) [and the Council's lead officer on older people](#) attend the development visit to Madrid on ~~21~~ 22 January 2010.

**Decision Tracking.**

[The Head of Environmental Health will provide update reports to the All Party Reference Group on Older People and to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee as required.](#)

**Key to Abbreviations.**

N/A

**Documents Attached.**

Draft Agenda for the ~~21~~ 22 January