

SPAIN

Diversification & job creation

Location

Almiradío de Navascués

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P6 – Social inclusion & local development

Measure

M06 – Farm & business development

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 37 275.70
EAFRD 24 229.20
National/Regional 13 046.50

Project duration

2017 – 2019

Project promoter

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n/a

Rural areas are commonly affected by depopulation and ageing populations. This project promoted healthy and active ageing in rural areas, by offering physical and social activities for the elderly.

Summary

Some regions of the Navarrese Pyrenees Mountains in northern Spain have experienced significant demographic changes in recent years. There has been depopulation specifically of young people, while the remaining population is ageing. The project for Active and Healthy Ageing began in the spring of 2017, in the municipality of Almiradío de Navascués.



The aim of the project was to expand and improve the activities and services offered to the elderly, so that they can remain active, healthy and independent in their home environment. In order to promote healthy and active ageing, the project offered physical and social activities to improve the physical and emotional wellbeing of the elderly population.

Results

The project has been appreciated, earning the respect of all parties involved. Even though at the start many of the elderly felt embarrassed or suspicious, the project workers managed to break down those barriers.

Initially, the project only covered the area of Almiradío de Navascués but nowadays, it covers almost all valleys of the Eastern Navarre Pyrenees including, the Salazar, Roncal, Aézcoa and Erro, representing 10% of the territory of the region.

The project is continuing its work, supported by other funds. Furthermore, what started as an individual initiative, turned into a cooperative that now has three partners and several employees.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ Having a resilient attitude was one of the most important aspects for starting this project. At the beginning, people were reluctant to participate in the activities because of their lack of knowledge about the project. Collaboration with local organisations was fundamental to spread the word and encourage people to participate.
- ❑ Another essential feature was to be clear about the project's objective. It was not a matter of merely having the necessary training for the development of the activities, to be successful it was important to pay attention, listen and make people feel supported.
- ❑ It was a continuous learning process, and day by day the project promoters adapted their work to the needs of the participants.

Context

The Navarrese Pyrenees Mountain areas have experienced significant demographic changes in recent years. The birth rate has decreased progressively, which has led to a reduction in the young population. The mortality rate has dropped significantly, and as a consequence life expectancy has increased. Furthermore, rural areas have lost young population because of the out-migration process from rural to urban areas, due to the lack of local job opportunities.

The situation has become particularly alarming in some municipalities, such as Almiradío de Navascués. The municipality's population is shrinking while the remaining population is ageing to a point where the sustainability of the community is uncertain. The supply of services and activities for the population was very limited and where programmes existed, there was a lack of continuity, especially for those aimed at the elderly. A programme with activities for the elderly had started in some health centres of the region, but the activities only lasted ten weeks. This programme was the seed of the project for 'Active and Healthy Ageing' that started in the spring of 2017 and was promoted by two individuals who live in the area. The promoters are graduates in physical and sport sciences and understood the need and the opportunity for them to contribute.

Health centres, educational institutions, retiree associations and public entities collaborated in the implementation of the project. They also participated in the adaptation and publicising of information about its activities. A network was formed where promoters and collaborators worked together, analysing and specifying the proposals that made up the project. The existing resources and services (human resources, infrastructures etc.) in the area were used to deliver the project.

Objectives

The main objective of this project was to provide activities and services for the elderly in the area that promote healthy and active ageing, contributing to keep their independence and offering them a platform for social interaction that, on the whole, improve their quality of life. Furthermore, the project aimed to:

- Contribute to the socio-economic development of the region, offering a service that would create employment and help maintain younger population in the area; and
- Establish a transferable model for areas with similar socio-economic characteristics.

Activities

The project included activities for active and healthy ageing, which were carried out by professionals. Two main types of activities were identified:

- Physical activities to maintain or improve their agility and delay deterioration and dependency; and
- Social activities, such as fine motor skills workshops, literary seminars or garden activities, to promote social relations and healthy lifestyle habits.

The project started in 2017 and it was initially focused on physical activities. One year later, social activities were incorporated. The activities were organised twice a week, in several valleys in the region. The activities started around 10 a.m., when the whole group of participants arrived from the different villages. They were divided into two groups: one group did physical exercises, and the other group did fine psychomotor activities. In addition, other social activities, such as gardening, storytelling, or carnival parties were organised.

The activities were aimed at people over 75 and patients with disabilities or chronic diseases. The activities aimed to enhance their autonomy, safety and prevention of disease relapse, as well as their emotional and social well-being. A transportation service was provided, so that all community members were able to participate in project activities.

The project offered these activities from September to June, adapting them to the physical and social aspects of each participant. Individual progress reports were made, and activities were prescribed to be carried out during the summer months if necessary. The main activities were paused during the summer because the elderly were usually visited by their relatives and wanted to devote their time to that, however, some activities, such as walks were maintained for participants who wished to do so. Two annual evaluations were carried out to establish how satisfied participants were and to collect their suggestions for improvement.

The collectives and public entities in the area collaborated in the implementation and development of the project. A network was created where the project promoters and collaborators worked together to move the project forward.

- Health centres helped to spread the work about the programme, encouraging their patients to participate in the activities. In addition, the project promoters worked in coordination with the health centres, providing the results of the evaluations of the participants, so that they could be treated in a more comprehensive way.

- Retiree associations also collaborated in the publicising of the project.
- Educational centres participated by providing training for the development and adaptation of physical and social activities. Furthermore, educational centres participated in the development of certain activities, such as the promotion of healthy eating habits.

Main Results

It should be noted that the project has been appreciated and earned the respect of all parties involved. Even though at the start many of the elderly felt embarrassed or suspicious, they managed to overcome these barriers.

The project has achieved an improvement in the physical and emotional wellbeing of the elderly population.

They have also succeeded in establishing a close collaboration with health centres in particular, and with the different structures related to the well-being of elderly people.

The project has been very well received and is currently continuing, with support from other funds. Furthermore, what started as an individual initiative evolved into a cooperative that now has three partners and several employees.

Initially, the project only covered the area of Almiradío de Navascués, however, nowadays, the project covers practically all valleys of the Eastern Navarre Pyrenees, Salazar, Roncal, Aézcoa and Erro, which represent 10% of the territory of the region.

Key lessons

Having a resilient attitude was one of the most important aspects for starting the project. At the beginning, people were reluctant to participate in the activities because of their lack of knowledge about the project. Collaboration with local organisations was fundamental to spread the word and encourage people to participate.



Another essential feature was to be clear about the project's objective. It was not a matter of merely having the necessary training for the development of the activities, to be successful it was important to pay attention, listen and make people feel supported.

The project has been promoted by people who live in the region who have the desire to work there, offering a service to improve the quality of life of the elderly. It has not been easy, and it was necessary to adapt to certain difficulties. Nevertheless, the project is reaching a large population and continues at present, financed with other funds. It had to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic, by carrying out all activities online, however, the promoters have been able to adapt and reinvent themselves, using technology to maintain the activity and keep it going.

Additional sources of information

www.youtube.com/watch?v=131KatixvRw&t=15s

www.navarra.es/NR/rdonlyres/F3A316E8-FEB4-4351-AE82-932A8616DF73/454289/M0602Todoslosresumenes.pdf