

DEMENTIA FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Organization: Slezská diakonie (Czech Republic)

Partner: Diaconia Valdese (Italy)

Time period: 6/2021 – 11/2022

Erasmus + Key Action 1: Mobility Project in Adult Vocational Training and Education 2021

Slezská diakonie is a non-governmental organization providing 112 services in the social field. For more than 20 years, it has also focused on services for elderly people, including those living with dementia and memory disorders. Slezská diakonie has identified a need for better and more individualized support for people with dementia and their families, so that they can live life with dignity and good quality in their own environment. In this project, we provided training in the concept of Dementia Friendly Communities and we aim to bring this innovative concept into the practice of Slezská diakonie and into practice in the Czech Republic. For around 20 years, Slezská diakonie has been working on quality improvements through education and methodical support. By realizing this project, we supported a learning culture and the development of new skills and knowledge among our staff, thereby aiming to increase the quality of provided services and share innovation.

By implementing this project, we have achieved:

- An increase in the quality of services provided by Slezská diakonie
- The transfer of innovative methods for supporting people with dementia and enabling them to live with dignity in their natural environment for as long as possible
- Development of skills and knowledge among staff members in the field of supporting people with dementia and their families
- Support for information sharing among the general public about living with dementia
- Development of national and international collaboration in supporting the quality of life of people with dementia, and the transfer of best practices from abroad to the Czech Republic

Project Activities:

During the project, two key activities were organized:

1. **Job shadowing at the host organization Diaconia Valdese in Torre Pellice (Italy)**
- This was a 4-day mobility for three staff members of Slezská diakonie who are involved in transferring the DFC concept into the practice of Slezská diakonie and the Czech Republic. It was an enriching experience of sharing knowledge and gaining inspiration in contact with people living with dementia, staff of Diaconia Valdese, and other stakeholders from the region. We also had the opportunity to practically experience dementia-friendly public places like pharmacies, universities, restaurants, mountain cottages, or town centers.
2. **Inviting experts from Italy (Diaconia Valdese) to Slezská diakonie** - This was a 3-day activity conducted after the job-shadowing in Italy. The activity was offered to around 10 staff members and was open to informal family carers, people with dementia, and representatives of municipalities. A one-day training for 20 staff members was organized, followed by a meeting for people living with dementia at the SILOE day center of Slezská diakonie. There was also an opportunity to meet with

family members in two areas of the north-east region of the Czech Republic. Another meeting was organized with various stakeholders as a round table discussion with participation from the Regional office, University, Czech Alzheimer Association, Municipality of Ostrava, and social service providers.

The goal of the stakeholders' meetings was to support staff training in the DFC concept and its transfer into the life of Slezská diakonie, to support family carers and people with dementia in their life with dignity, and to encourage collaboration with municipalities in the implementation of the DFC concept in local communities.

Project Results and Inspirations:

- Information for transferring the DFC concept into the practice of Slezská diakonie
- Knowledge and skills that enable the preparation of a more comprehensive DFC project and its implementation in the life of Slezská diakonie
- An opportunity to learn by doing and support the development of new knowledge and competencies of direct care staff in supporting people with dementia.
- Support for the topic of good quality and dignified life for people living with dementia and their families and sharing information in this field.
- Support for international collaboration - both at the organizational level and in the transfer of best practices within European and national associations
- Development of innovative and interactive ways of adult education using various tools

This project will be followed by a European Social Fund project: Dementia Friendly Communities in the Czech Republic, which will be launched in January 2024 with a duration of 36 months. It is a pilot project on the implementation of dementia-friendly community criteria in two regions.

For more information, you can contact Romana Bělová (r.belova@slezskadiakonie.cz).



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