

PROMOTING ACTIVE AND HEALTHY AGEING

Annual Report 2022

1. Introduction

Since 2017, the Public Association "CASMED" has been engaged in promoting the concept of active and healthy ageing in the Republic of Moldova, playing a key role in supporting the development of Initiative Groups (IG) in different communities.

The 2022 Annual Report presents progress and achievements in the field of active and healthy ageing.

This document provides an overview of the activities carried out, the objectives achieved and the impact on local communities.

II. Development of Initiative Groups

In 2022, 12 new Initiative Groups were initiated and developed, bringing the total number to 47 active IGs. The total number of members of these IGs increased from 557 in 2021 to 694 in 2022. The gender composition remains in favour of women, with 78.25% women and 21.75% men. Geographical distribution: 8.74% urban and 91.26% rural.

The occupational profile of new members in the IM is as follows: Housewives (15.5%); Unemployed (1%); Pensioners (78%); Students (0%); On maternity leave (0%); Employed official (5.5%).

The average age of IM members is 52, while the average age of older IM members is 65.

III. Activities and impact

In 2022, IGs conducted a total of 13,460 support visits to 1,263 vulnerable elderly and disabled people in their communities. The most common support activities were: socialization, psycho-social support and personal hygiene, providing food and medicine shopping, preparing and or distributing hot meals, house and garden cleaning, providing gas bottle change, fetching water, chopping wood, etc.

Some IGs have applied art therapy, helping seniors discover new creative skills and prevent depression.

A total of 109 initiatives were presented by IGs at city council meetings in 2022, covering IG meeting spaces, funding for cultural initiatives, clean-up activities and support for refugees.

The war in Ukraine has generated mobilisation and support from the whole of society, including older people in communities. IG beneficiaries provided emotional and material support to Ukrainian refugees, helping them to integrate into the host community.

VI. Conclusions and Recommendations

The report for 2022 highlights a significant increase in the development and involvement of Community Initiative Groups. These groups have had a positive impact

on the lives of older and vulnerable people in rural and urban areas. For the future, it is recommended to continue to support and develop these initiatives, to promote the active participation of older people in community activities and to extend collaboration with local authorities and partner organisations.



2. Extension of the Initiative Groups

Since 2017, CASMED has supported the establishment and development of 30 IMs, bringing together 458 people (83% women and 17% men). In 2021, efforts continued with the establishment of 9 new IMs in the localities of Brînzeni, Cuconeștii Noi, Rotunda, Cepeleuti, Năvîrneț, Taxobeni, Ciolacul Nou, Albinețul Vechi and Faleștii Noi. These groups brought together 177 people (84% women and 16% men).

The average age of the members of these new Initiative Groups ranges from 42 to 68, with an overall average of 53. This indicates a significant increase in the average age of people involved in these groups, reflecting an increased interest among older people to become actively involved in the community.

The process of setting up the Initiative Groups in 2021 has been significantly influenced by the pandemic. Many of the initial meetings were postponed or repeatedly rescheduled due to restrictions and fears of infection. However, members' perseverance and willingness to engage overcame the obstacles, ultimately facilitating the establishment of these new IGs.

3. Objectives and Results

3.1. Targets for 2021:

- Increase the number of members of initiative groups.
- Active involvement of older people in local decision-making.

- Strengthening the role of initiative groups as actors in community mobilisation and advocacy for the rights of older and disabled people.
- Keeping in touch and supporting vulnerable people in the community.

3.2. Results achieved:

- Recognition of initiative groups as important factors in the community.
- Active involvement in local planning and decision-making.
- Mobilising resources and attracting funds for community projects.
- Participation and contribution of initiative groups to local events and initiatives.
- Inspiring other communities through successful examples of initiative groups.
- Evaluation of the Institutional Development of the initiative groups

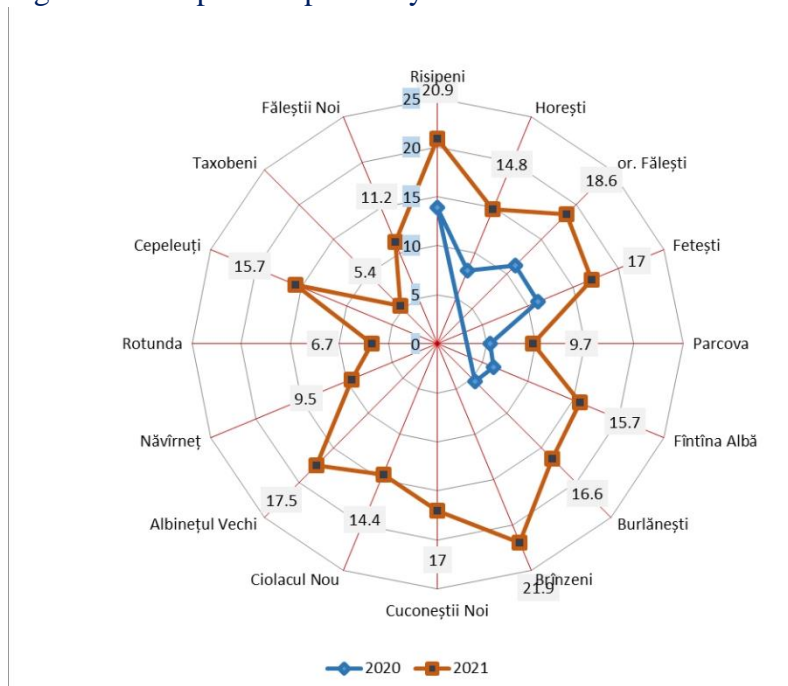
The expansion of the number of initiative groups has led to significant changes in communities. These groups have been recognised by local public authorities as relevant actors in decision-making processes and have attracted resources to the community through partnerships and initiatives.

4. Institutional Development of Initiative Groups

At the end of 2021, we conducted an analysis of the institutional development of the initiative groups, focusing on issues such as group organisation, role distribution, communication, decision-making and resource management. This exercise gave us a clearer picture of each IG's progress and guided us in planning future support and training activities.

The results obtained allow the group to be classified in one of the four stages of development: start-up, growth, consolidation and maturity.

Figure 1. Group development dynamics



Through comparative analysis of the data in Figure 1. Dynamics

institutional development of clusters, the following trends in the evolution of clusters were observed:

Stage 1 (Start): IGs from Rotunda, Parcova, Făleștii Noi and Taxobeni.

Stage 2 (Growth): IG from Cepeleuti, Navarnet, Cioclacul Nou, Horești, Fîntîna Albă, Burlănești, Cuconeștii Noi, Fetești.

Stage 3 (Consolidation): IM of Albinețul Vechi, Fălești, Brînzei and Risipeni.

5. National Network of Active Seniors in Moldova

The National Network of Active Seniors in Moldova (RNSAM) has achieved a lot during the year. It expanded its membership to 15 members compared to 13 the previous year. In addition, a kit of documents was developed for simpler and more efficient functioning, increasing the cohesion and effectiveness of the network. These measures have helped to strengthen relations between members, increasing the visibility and trust of the network at regional, national and international level.

- **Individual development of seniors**

RNSAM members have acquired new skills and competences, including digital, communication and advocacy skills. They learned to recognise and manage depressive states and to integrate a gender perspective. This personal development has led to increased self-esteem and self-confidence among seniors, supporting them to become more vocal voices in the community.

- **Active participation in the public space**

Through the activities supported by CASMED, RNSAM members have gained confidence and courage to express their views in the public space. They have participated in public meetings with EU delegation representatives, politicians and have appeared on TV and radio programmes. These experiences have increased their confidence in a better future.

- **Skills development and exchange of experience**

A comprehensive capacity building programme was offered to RNSAM members, covering areas such as network management, communication, visibility, depression, and community engagement. This training programme developed new skills and competences, enhancing the exchange of experience and best practice.

"As a network, we're just starting out and it's not easy. We've learned a lot so far and we still have a lot to learn and do. We've been taken out of our comfort zone and we're happy to be useful and make some improvements in our community. I feel motivated to do more," Elena Darii, IG "Sofienii", Sofia village, Drochia district.

- **Community impact**

RNSAM members have become not only more confident in their own strengths, but also more active in solving community problems. They have tackled issues at local and regional level, approaching both the authorities and the local community to solve various challenges. This has resulted in better public services that are more responsive to the needs of older people.

6. Grandma and Grandpa Fest 2021: Innovative and inspired adaptation

In a context where the evolution of the epidemiological situation and the vaccination process against Covid-19 have not brought significant improvements, a key decision has been taken to protect participants: the online organisation of the Grandma and Grandpa Fest 2021. Thus, efforts originally prepared for the offline event were ingeniously redesigned and adapted for the virtual environment.

This remarkable event was organised in partnership with the National Network of Active Seniors of Moldova (RNSAM) from 13-19 September. The effort put into the smooth running of the festival was substantial, involving the participation of over 190 people from 20 Seniors Groups Clubs, who recorded short videos to promote their talents, occupations, and products. Over the course of a week, from Monday to Saturday, media content was distributed on the [Grandma and Grandpa Fest](#) Facebook page.

A photo exhibition of 14 inspirational stories of the elderly was organised, followed by five video vignettes on health topics such as beauty, healthy eating, mental health, sexual health, and sport. The programme was also complemented by a collection of old ballads performed by seniors and an exhibition of large or fun-sized vegetables and fruits from seniors' gardens, such as pumpkins, raspberries, potatoes, tomatoes, and carrots.

Two competitions have been launched: "Silver-haired Dancers" and "Miss Grandma and Mister Grandpa Fest". These competitions gathered over 24 participants from CGSs and senior pairs. The contests captivated both participants and fans, who voted for the winners through their appreciations. In the end, the "Silver Age" team from the village of Cajba, Glodeni district, was named the winner of the dance competition, while Olga and Eugen Dubeț from the village of Balatina, Glodeni district, were crowned Miss Grandma and Mister Grandpa Fest.

The two-hour "Grandma and Grandpa Fest 2021" totalization event took place on September 19, 2021, on the Zoom platform and was broadcast live on Facebook and TV Nord.

This live event was moderated by a presenter, supported by festival mascots and the CASMED team. The event brought together over 120 seniors from 20 groups, along with guests, diaspora, and government representatives. On Facebook, the event gained over 2900 views and the festival Facebook page gained over 5900 followers, 2800 likes and had an impact on 274,619 people, generating 25,096 interactions.

"It was an unusual edition, full of challenges but also full of opportunities. Of course, we remember with nostalgia the first 3 editions of the festival, when, for one day, the city of Balti became the capital of happy seniors. But this online edition exceeded all expectations. So many interesting materials were published online, and they were viewed, enjoyed, appreciated by thousands and thousands of people of different ages, far away from the borders of our localities, even far away from the borders of the country" - Galina Spataru,

All participants received diplomas, and the opinions and suggestions collected will guide planning for future events. Although they faced challenges, the organising team successfully overcame obstacles, adapting the agenda and migrating the event from offline to online due to the precarious state of public health.

The costs for the organisation of the Grandma and Grandpa Fest 2021, as well as the capacity building activities of RNSAM, were funded by the Embassy of Austria and the Swiss Red Cross.

7. Conclusions

The year 2021 was a year of significant achievements for the National Network of Active Seniors of Moldova. Through the support provided by CASMED, members gained confidence, skills, and abilities, becoming strong voices in the community, and promoting active and healthy ageing.

The increasing number of initiative groups and the progress they are making shows that these groups are becoming increasingly influential and active in their communities. We expect this positive trend to continue and bring significant benefits to older people across the country.

Despite the challenges, seniors have shown a willingness and desire to learn digital skills and adapt to new environments. They received guidance and support from the CASMED team, volunteers and others in the community who delivered workshops and training sessions.

This will pave the way for further development of participants' digital skills.

CASMED remains committed to supporting these efforts and promoting the active involvement of older people in the development and well-being of local communities.