

Narrative report

Subject: Implementation of the concept of Age Friendly Community (CPV)

Period: January-December 2022

Objective: The Age Friendly Community concept continues to be developed and implemented in Edineț and Fălești districts

The Republic of Moldova changed the development paradigm and abandoned the development of regional development strategies in the context of reforms. Therefore, the project directed its efforts to support the rural localities and district authorities of Edineț and Fălești, which committed to piloting the CPV concept.

The number of partner communities (10 communities in 2020) implementing CPV increased to 20 in 2021 and then gradually increased to 35 in 2022. Most of the localities (25) implementing the CPV concept are in Fălești, representing 75% of all localities. In the Edineț district, the number is lower, approximately 32% of the total communities.

So far, 37 Coordinating Committees (CC), 35 at the local level and 2 at the district level, have been established and assisted by the project. The graphical representation of the targeted communities can be seen in Figure 1.

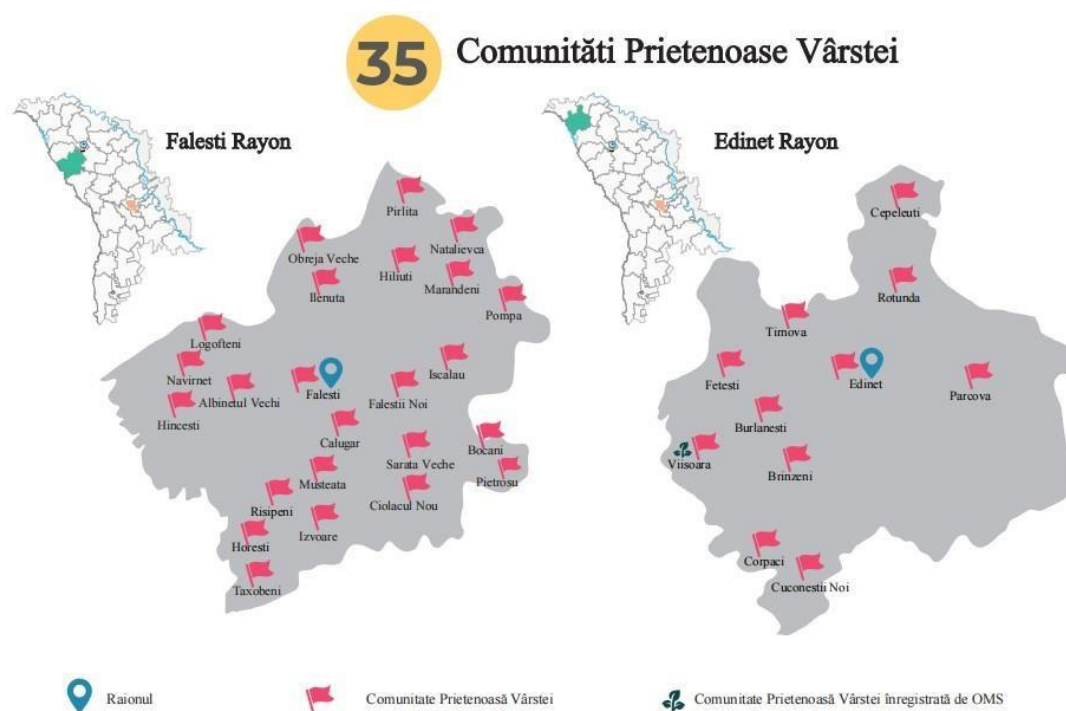


Figure 1. Map of age-friendly communities

Although historically Fălești was a more disadvantaged district, with limited opportunities and poorly developed infrastructure, people warmly embraced the idea of CPV development. The changes the project has brought to the project are remarkable. Some mayors, quite skeptical before, noted the transformation that took place among the people, thanks to the support of the project. Being constantly exposed to discussions, interactions and exploring solutions to common problems, people have become more open, pro-active, motivated and supportive towards the elderly. Mr. Alexandru Severin, the mayor of Fălești municipality, said: "It is very important that the local public administration supports local actions. People come up with proposals, get involved in the community, so it is my obligation as mayor to help them whenever I have the opportunity. We are proud to have managed to set up a meeting place where groups

of seniors organize charity events, raise awareness of the needs of the elderly, organize concerts, host guests, being very active and supportive of the community in which they live. " According to the mayor of Pîrlița village, Făleşti district - a locality that has recently embraced the idea of an age-friendly community, CCL members have become more aware of their role and are aware of the friendly community and the risks to which the elderly has exposed. , ,

Seniors should not feel frustrated or inhibited by climbing stairs, or overwhelmed by the demands of maintaining their older homes, or being unable to carry out their daily activities, whether it's getting dressed or going to the doctor. They don't have to fear walking on their streets - because of the danger of injury or aggressive dogs."

Condru Constantin, the mayor of Chetriș village, Falesti district, believes that the project provides the necessary support and is an opportunity for improvement: *"I worked for many years in France where I saw a high standard of living and decent wages. As I got older, I returned to my native village and was elected mayor. My main goal is to improve the living conditions of the elderly, who make up more than 76% of the population of our localities. This project gives me the opportunity to achieve my goal, with not much money great things can be done that can change lives. It is important to motivate people, to mobilize them, to have a common goal, to observe people's needs and act according to them"*. The passive involvement of the Edineț district administration constituted a serious obstacle in making changes at the district level regarding the CPV strategy. Although the issues were included in the district's strategy, little or no action was taken in this regard. However, the collaboration with the decision-makers in Edineț improved a little, as a new vice-president was appointed, who was more open to supporting the activity of the District Coordinating Committee (RCC), especially after the joint meeting hosted by the CCR, in which the mayors of Edineț presented examples of the changes observed in their localities. *"The village of Corpaci has changed substantially with the implementation of the Aging and Health project and the standard of living of the elderly has increased. We managed to create a CCL, which draws up the CPV action plan annually and monitors its implementation. The most active members of the Initiative Group visit the most vulnerable elderly people, we provide them with communication and help with housework, distribute food from the canteen and collect the problems faced by the tenants and communicate them to the mayor. We opened the social canteen and APL co-finances this activity because there are elderly people who have vision problems and other diseases, for which preparing food is practically impossible. APL co-financed the development of a park near the church, with the help of the mini grant received. Now this is the most favorite place for grandparents and grandchildren to gather and enjoy spending time together. Thanks to the socio-medical home care services offered in the locality, the elderly do not live in fear that no one will open the door or help them."*, emphasized Mr. Veacesla Uja, the mayor of the village of Corpaci, Edineț.

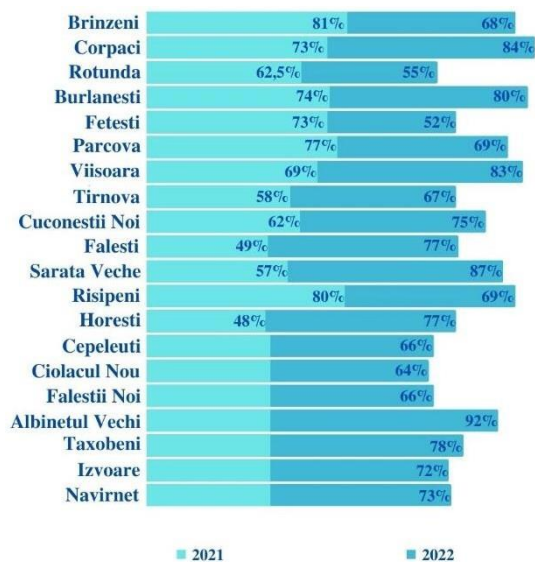
Mrs. Irina Chimacovscaia, mayor of Cuconestii Noi, declared that the project's intervention created social cohesion among the population: *"We live in a diverse society with many nationalities and religions. The creation of GI and CCL created conditions for people of different nationalities such as Moldovans, Ukrainians, Bulgarians, but also of different Christian religions to act together and take part in the decision-making process. Everyone has a different idea of how to improve the lives of older adults and how everyone can get involved. Volunteer work was not very popular in our region, but when we learned to work as a team - we all became a driving force for others, with the aim of benefiting the village and helping the elderly and the less vulnerable. The villagers changed, they got more involved, they were not indifferent, like before and we felt like a real community where one takes care of the other."*

Following the competition, the grant committee accepted 10 age-friendly initiatives (small grants), which were successfully implemented. The project covered up to 50,000 MDL (about 2600 CHF) per project idea (mini grant). Thus, the total value of all initiatives was approx. CHF 75,200, where the project covered 38% and APL the remaining 62%. The proposed initiatives included building a sidewalk so that the elderly can more easily access important public institutions, installing benches and dustbins, installing street name posts to direct the ambulance and save lives as soon as possible

possible, the installation of waiting stations in public spaces, bus stops for decent waiting conditions and parks for practicing sports and outdoor activities for the elderly and children. New opportunities have been created for older people to support socialisation, leisure and recreational activities. Seniors felt that teamwork and volunteer involvement were effective in combating isolation and depression. As a result of local initiatives, people have realized that both young and old benefit when communities improve the safety and appeal of pedestrian sidewalks or make parks safer and more physically attractive.

The results achieved were celebrated in the "Week of Change" event, organized in each community that received the grant, which brought together over 2,300 people of different ages to celebrate the Age-Friendly environment. Social media is widely used by people in Moldova, especially Facebook, therefore CCL and CCR members regularly posted on Facebook all the results obtained, as well as the success stories of those involved.

The joint celebration of success following the implementation of the mini-grants also had a mobilizing effect, because people got to know each other better, some even overcame certain stereotypes and personal prejudices. The constant sharing of results and successes on social media channels, especially on the Friendly Committees Platform established on Facebook, where all target localities have access, encouraged and motivated people for new initiatives and achievements.



Given the limited local budget and high utility costs, none of the target communities were able to implement all the interventions planned under the Annual Action Plan. The graphics representation of the degree of achievement of the implementation of the activity plan can be consulted in Figure 2. Thus, the most advanced were Albinetul Vechi, which achieved the highest percentage (92%), and the lowest performance was recorded in Fetești (52%). The analysis of the level of involvement of CCL, LPA and GI members highlighted that those localities that were able to develop and maintain strong collaboration and cooperation between LPA, CCL and GI were able to overcome the challenges they faced much more easily and achieved more significantly results, respectively.

Figure 2. Percentage of implementation of local action plans

More than 64 training sessions and workshops were held in 2022 for CC members and other key community actors, attended by 620 people (89% women, 11% men). The interest of the participants in the trainings and workshops in the communities was high, as people realized what a change they could make at a personal or community level if they joined. More details can be consulted in Figure 3.

According to the feedback from the training sessions, workshops and meetings, the members of the Coordinating Committees learned how to determine the problems and needs of the elderly in their locality, how to conduct a survey and analyze the results, they learned what the risks and needs of the elderly are, they learned to put on paper the actions to be solved, to determine the key persons to whom the problems can be addressed and solved, to draw up an action plan based on the activities indicated in the socio-economic development strategy of the locality and to monitor the following activities to be resolved.

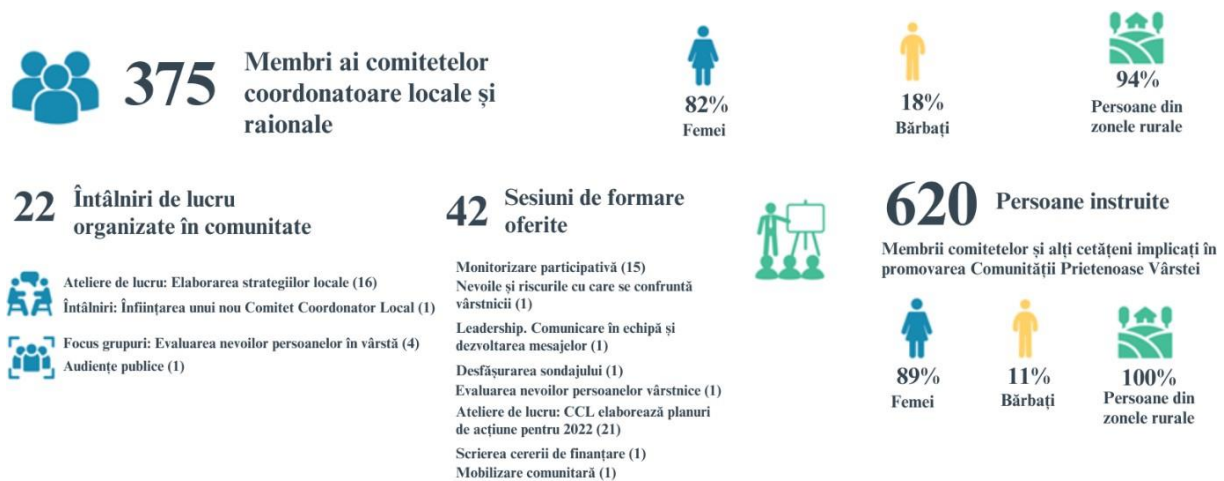


Figure 3. Capacity building program for CC members in numbers

With the support of AO "CASMED", the localities of Viișoara in the Edineț district and Cobîlea in the Șoldănești district were recognized by the World Health Organization as Age-Friendly Communities, becoming members of the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Network for age - friendly cities and communities. By joining the Network, the villages of Viișoara and Cobîlea commit to share and promote the central values and principles of the WHO approach for the elderly, implementing concrete steps to create local environments favorable to the elderly and active participation in the Network, including sharing experiences with other members.

Participating in the WHO Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities has a number of benefits: the visibility of the actions carried out and the results achieved in the community, the opportunity to exchange experience, twinning with other localities within the WHO.

Conclusion and opportunities

Despite the positive results obtained, the implementation of interventions was overshadowed by the numerous crises that affected the Republic of Moldova and reduced the speed and scope of some interventions, especially those related to the implementation of CPV plans and advocacy activities.

The multitude of crises has affected the budgets of local authorities and their financial capacity to develop more social services and opportunities for vulnerable people.

It seems that next year will be a year with more challenges for Moldova, in the context of unprecedented inflation and chain crises that have further deepened the existing vulnerabilities. But despite the gloomy forecasts, we tend to believe that the skills and infrastructure developed, the lessons learned and the results achieved so far in the interventions carried out, will serve as a cushion to mitigate possible declines and to continue to further support the most vulnerable.



References to sources:

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